

THE IRISH IN THE SOUTH, 1815-1877

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IN THE
SOUTH,
1815
1877**

DAVID T. GLEESON

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi

INTRODUCTION

The Forgotten People of the Old South 1

CHAPTER ONE

The Irish Diaspora 10

CHAPTER TWO

Urban Pioneers in the Old South 23

CHAPTER THREE

Earning a Living 38

CHAPTER FOUR

Family, Community, and Ethnic Awareness 55

CHAPTER FIVE

Keeping the Faith 74

CHAPTER SIX

The Irish, the Natives, and Politics 94

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Know-Nothing Challenge 107

CHAPTER EIGHT

Slavery, State Rights, and Secession 121

CHAPTER NINE

The Green and the Gray 141

CHAPTER TEN

Irish Confederates 158

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Postwar Integration 173

CONCLUSION

Irish Southerners 187

APPENDIX

Occupational Status Classification 195

Notes 197 Selected Bibliography 239 Index 269

TABLES & ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLES

1. Irish Population of the South as a Percentage of the Total and White Populations in 1850 and 1860 26
2. Number of Irish in the South in 1850 and 1860 27
3. Irish Population of Selected Southern Cities in 1850 and 1860 35
4. Irish Population of Selected Southern Cities as a Percentage of the Total and White Populations in 1850 and 1860 36
5. Occupational Status of Irish Men Aged 15 and Over in Selected Southern Cities, 1850 39
6. Occupational Status of Irish Men Aged 15 and Over in Selected Southern Cities, 1860 40
7. Numbers of Irish Men Aged 15 and Over Employed in Skilled and White-Collar Occupations, 1860 41

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Father Jeremiah O'Neill Sr. 2
- Levee workers and draymen 45
- St. Patrick's Church, New Orleans 59
- Bishop John England 79
- Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Savannah, Georgia 84
- Margaret Haughery 89
- Statue of Margaret Haughery in New Orleans 90
- Father Ignatius J. Mullon 117
- Patrick Murphy 126
- Captain Felix Hughes 147
- Major General Patrick Ronayne Cleburne, CSA 153
- Statue to the Irish Jasper Greens, Savannah, Georgia 191

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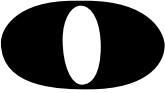
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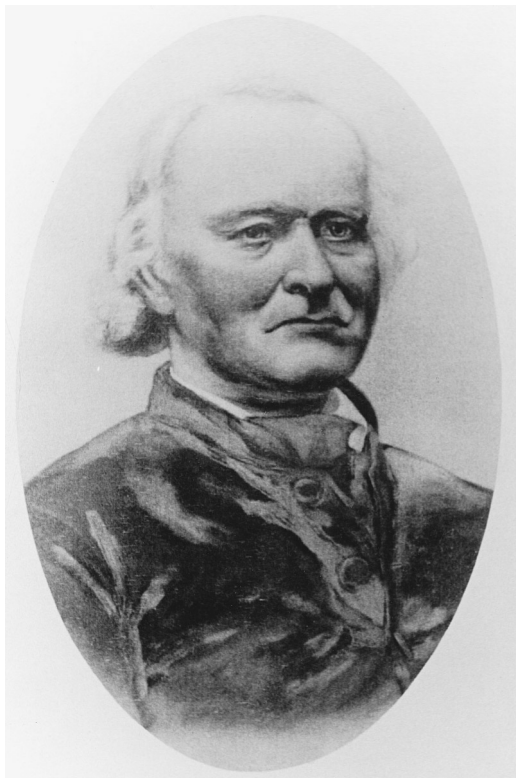
THE IRISH IN THE SOUTH, 1815-1877

INTRODUCTION

THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE OF THE OLD SOUTH

n 12 December 1860, some of Savannah, Georgia's finest gathered to address crowds of citizens about the necessity of seceding from the United States. The "Black Republican" Abraham Lincoln's recent victory in the presidential election had been the final straw for these southern partisans. The mayor of the city and other leading political figures made fiery speeches to which the crowd responded with "rapturous applause." To the recorder of this event, however, there seemed to be one odd figure on the speakers' platform. Dressed in black, with his collar the only dash of white in his attire, he was called to speak by the crowd. The man, who bore such a striking resemblance to the former president Andrew Jackson that people often referred to him as "Old Hickory," came forward and in a pronounced accent "declared himself 'a *republican* and a *sacessionist* and a *satizen* of Georgia.' " If seceding precipitated war, he added, then "he would be the first 'to *lade* them into battle.' " ¹ This unusual Georgian was the Reverend Jeremiah O'Neill Sr., a native of Lixnaw, County Kerry, Ireland. He had served as pastor to the Catholic Irish of Savannah for nearly thirty years and was a hero to his flock. He also enjoyed great respect among the city's native population. On one occasion, he had protected the city from the attack of a group of angry unpaid Irish railroad workers intent on settling their claims by any means necessary. ²

The organizers of the secession meeting had not invited O'Neill only because they respected him. They undoubtedly invited him to appeal to the city's sizable and, more important, politically active immigrant Irish population. They were playing an ethnic card. Ethnic politics beyond race, however, is rarely seen by historians as a major issue in southern history. ³ The current wisdom is that the nineteenth-century South was a "White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Nest—a WASP's nest." Those few Irish who wandered into the South were "culturally isolated" and soon disappeared into the dominant majority culture. ⁴ By assimilating so well, the Irish, like the other "plain folk of the Old South," became, in the history books, a forgotten people.



Father Jeremiah O'Neill Sr.
(Author's collection)

Fifty years ago, Frank Owsley raised the cry for study of the “forgotten” yeoman farmer. Since then, researchers of the Old South have had to take this group seriously.⁵ The significance of differences among antebellum southern whites is now taken for granted in southern historiography.⁶ This study adds an ethnic dimension to the definition of the white southern plain folk and thus expands the story of the Irish in America.

The study of the Irish in the South is important for two reasons. First, it fills a gap in the historiography of Irish America. The major works on the Irish in nineteenth-century America give short shrift to the Irish in the South. There is nothing surprising about this omission in light of the fact that about 90 percent of the Irish who came to America did not settle south of the Mason-Dixon line. Only 84,000 of the 1.2 million Irish immigrants in America in 1860 had settled in the eleven states that joined the Confederacy in 1861. Making generalizations about “Irish America” from a study of northern sources thus has much validity.⁷ Nonetheless, it is not the full story. The late historian of the Philadelphia Irish, Dennis Clark, recognized this fact in *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Cultures*. Examining Irish Americans in a regional context, Clark realized

that the Irish immigrants' experience in America often depended upon where they lived in the United States. In particular, Clark felt that more study of the Irish in the South would provide "a far-reaching opportunity to examine the neglected differences that have resulted in broad variations in the history of ethnic groups in American society."⁸

The story of the Irish in the South may also have a larger significance. It may tell us a lot about "the antebellum South" and all the economic, social, religious, and political features implicit in that term. By examining a distinctive minority who had to figure out how to fit into a foreign and strange society, we can learn much about the society itself. Some historians have already pioneered this kind of study of a distinctive minority in the Old South. In their respective works on free blacks, they have told us as much about the region as they have about the group itself.⁹ The Irish provide an even better case study. From climate to politics, everything about the South was alien to the immigrant Irish. The only advantage most of them had was some knowledge of English, but large numbers could not read or write in any language.¹⁰ Irish immigrants in the South had an added assimilation task. Those who arrived after 1820 did so in a region that was becoming much more distinctly "southern."¹¹ Thomas P. Abernethy described the immediate post-War of 1812 period as the "high water mark of Southern nationalism."¹² Charles S. Sydnor found the beginnings of "a change of the first magnitude in the relationship of the South to the nation" within a few years of Andrew Jackson's great victory at the Battle of New Orleans.¹³ These Irish, unlike their counterparts in the North, had to adopt the views of their new region: they had to become not only Americans, but southerners as well.

With an emphasis on the process of acculturation to a regional society, this study focuses on all the Irish-born who lived in the South between 1815 and 1877. The definition of "the South" used in this study is a political one: the eleven states that formed the Confederacy in 1861. While states such as Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri were southern in a cultural sense, they did not join their fellow slave states to the south in seceding from the Union. They are correctly described as "border states," with divided loyalties between the North and South. For this reason and because there were much larger numbers of Irish in these states compared to the ones farther south, the Irish in the border states deserve a separate study.

The year 1815 is a turning point in both Irish and American history: calamitous for Ireland but fortuitous for the United States. The contrast between the confident and growing America and the depressed and declining Ireland came to the fore after this year. It was also the starting point of the massive Irish emigration to America.¹⁴ The year 1877 is not

particularly remarkable in Irish history, but it is in American history. That year ushered in the formal end of Reconstruction. The national Republican Party gave white southerners “home rule” in return for the election of its presidential candidate, and southerners in turn set out to create a “New South.”¹⁵ The Reconstruction era (1863–77) was key to Irish integration in the South. After 1877 the Irish in the region became faithful members of the “Solid South,” and they, and particularly their southern-born children, took advantage of the opportunities that such membership offered.

Between those pivotal years, 1815 and 1877, most of the Irish who came to the United States were Catholic, although large numbers of the “Scots Irish” Presbyterians from the northern province of Ulster continued to arrive.¹⁶ A few Anglo-Irish Protestants also joined the great nineteenth-century exodus from Ireland. Protestant immigrants were more likely to be prosperous and to have established connections in the region than were Irish Catholics. The eighteenth-century “Scots Irish” migration to the colonial South meant that the region already had a certain Irish flavor. The vast majority of these earlier immigrants and their immediate descendants had taken part in the American Revolution and in the politics of the new nation. They were among the first “Americans.” Their ardent patriotism gave them substantial influence in the framing of their new country. Thus, thanks in large part to a fortuitous time of arrival, they helped to create a distinctive American society into which they and their descendants blended easily. When Andrew Jackson, the hero of New Orleans and the son of Ulster immigrants, became president of the United States in 1829, he epitomized not only the triumph of the “common man” but also the triumph of Scots Irish assimilation.¹⁷ Many nineteenth-century Ulster migrants, therefore, had cousins or friends who could provide aid and comfort when they arrived in the South.

Despite the advantages Irish Protestants may have had over their Catholic countrymen, they were still foreigners in the Old South. Friendly faces could not overcome the differences between the South and their homes across the Atlantic. They were still Irish, and when they opened their mouths to speak, every native southerner knew that they were strangers and not long-lost Celtic cousins. In contrast to this view, through an examination of everything from southern folk music to herding practices, distinguished Civil War and constitutional scholars Grady McWhiney and Forrest McDonald argue that the Old South was a mirror image of the “Celtic” societies in the British Isles. The descendants of Anglo-Saxons did not dominate the South; it was the descendants of “Celts” who cre-

ated a distinctive southern culture. Yet McWhiney and McDonald have used the term “Celtic” too broadly, lumping Irish, Scots, Scots Irish, Welsh, and even northern English into one homogeneous group. This flaw, along with a rather hasty dismissal of English and American influences on the South and no examination of the nineteenth-century immigrant Irish experience, limits the value of McWhiney’s and McDonald’s work as a study of the “ethnic” South.¹⁸ The fact is that the Scots Irish who arrived in the South between 1815 and 1877 also had to integrate.

Some scholars have realized the potential of studying the Irish acculturation to the South. As early as the 1940s, historians Ella Lonn and Herbert Weaver took notice of Irish immigrants in the nineteenth-century South. Lonn attempted to show the importance of foreign participation in the Confederate war effort, while Weaver used census returns to point out this hidden group of plain folk and ponder their impact on southern communities. The first major treatment of the Irish in the urban South came in 1956 with Earl F. Niehaus’s *The Irish in New Orleans, 1800–1860*. Niehaus combed antebellum newspapers to substantiate the significant role the Irish played in the economic, social, political, and economic life of the Crescent City.¹⁹ More recently, in an attempt to show that not all of southern history took place on the plantation, urban and labor historians have recognized the presence of Irish immigrants in the urban workforce of the antebellum South.²⁰ Ira Berlin and Herbert Gutman initially set out merely to study the skill levels of slaves in the urban South. They were stunned to find how vital immigrants were to the economies of southern towns. They stated boldly that free white workers—including immigrants—presented a major threat to the southern slaveholding power structure. Berlin and Gutman called for greater study of immigrant workers’ influence on the South. This group could not “simply be incorporated into the extant understanding of the nature of southern society.”²¹

A few unpublished yet more comprehensive community studies challenge this view. By examining the Irish experience beyond the workplace and by seeing the Irish in the South as subjects rather than objects in their own story, Paul Thigpen and Edward Shoemaker have shown how the Irish in Savannah defied “cultural isolation” and “breakdown” by integrating into local society.²² The one disadvantage of these community studies is that the Irish in Savannah made up less than 5 percent of the Irish population in the South. These works certainly highlight the vibrancy of one small Irish community in the Old South, but life in Savannah may have been a unique experience for the Irish immigrant and not representative of the Irish experience in the rest of the region.

My study attempts to overcome the weakness inherent in community studies. At the same time, while making regional generalizations, it also recognizes unique individual circumstances.

Ironically, a broader study of the Irish in the South provides greater opportunities to examine individual experiences. One of the reasons I chose to examine the Irish in the South is the greater number of manuscript sources such a large task provided. Inspired in some sense by Kerby Miller's massive tome on the Irish in America, I wanted as much as possible to let the Irish in the South tell their own story.²³ In this way, they became the subjects and not the objects of this study. The other examinations of the Irish in the South have, in large measure, depended on the usual sources of censuses, newspapers, and contemporary native descriptions of Irish immigrants to fill in for the absence of Irish-created materials. In many cases these studies rely too heavily on such evidence and create an incorrect impression of Irish life in the South. This is not to say that these sources are not valuable, but an overreliance upon them can lead to faulty conclusions. For example, one researcher's excellent research in census and city directory records led him to the extreme conclusion (which I believe erroneous) that the "Irish immigrants were as much victims of the Old South as the slaves."²⁴

The Irish in the Old South were not and did not see themselves as victims. Many of them did, however, see themselves as exiles. Their leaving, even if it was one of rational choice, they believed had some element of compulsion.²⁵ Many, especially the famine arrivals, considered themselves members of a diaspora forced from their country by British misrule.²⁶ Numbers of the Irish who had settled in the South before the Great Famine felt the same way and only became more embittered when news of that catastrophe hit the United States in the late 1840s. Unlike Kerby Miller, however, I believe that this feeling of exile did not hinder Irish integration into southern society. The Irish in the South did not wallow in their exile but used it as a means to various ends. Initially, they used it to preserve ethnic awareness within their immigrant enclaves and to reap benefits such as jobs, housing, and social occasions, which accrued from this preservation. Later, this ethnic awareness became even more useful in building bonds with natives when the Irish recognized parallels between Ireland's relationship with Britain and the South's with the North. Paradoxically, then, their retention of a strong "Irishness" actually advanced their integration.

An understanding of the Ireland the Irish left for the South is vital to understanding their integration journey. Chapter 1 shows what a volatile place the island was and why many of the immigrants, even the economically "rational" ones, thought that the British and their Anglo-Irish sur-

rogates had forced them to leave. Their lives in Ireland or, in the cases of those who immigrated as young children, stories of their parents' lives there made them realize that no matter how difficult life became in the South, at least it was better than in Ireland. Even in their darkest days in the South, for most there seemed to be far more opportunity for improvement there. Not many went back.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the Irish presence in the antebellum South and how they got there. This chapter demonstrates the significance of the Irish in the urban South. It was in southern towns that the Irish were most visible and made up a sizable proportion of the population. The towns and cities were where the Irish had their greatest difficulties but also where they found their greatest opportunities. Chapter 3 shows how they located a niche at the bottom of the urban labor market and how many progressed from there. It also illustrates the reality that the Irish did more than just the work that was "death on niggers and mules."²⁷ Beyond work, the Irish, depending upon when they arrived, found towns more conducive to creating or joining vibrant ethnic communities. Along with family and contact with home, these Irish neighborhoods supplied for numerous immigrants a sense of security in the strange and volatile world in which they found themselves. Chapter 4 highlights how a continued keen interest in Ireland and Irish affairs helped the immigrants retain some semblance of distinctive identity and helped the Irish avoid total "cultural breakdown."²⁸ Their continued faith in God and, for Catholics, in Mother Church, explored in Chapter 5, was also very important in bringing stability to Irish life in the South.

Retaining an Irish and Catholic identity certainly made the Irish more conspicuous in the South, but it did not isolate them. On the contrary, it gave them the confidence to move into the public arena. Like their fellow countrymen in the North, the Irish became interested in politics, a theme that I examine in Chapter 6. The Irish were important voting blocs in most southern towns, and native-born politicians had to take them seriously. The Irish were especially attracted to the Democratic Party of Andrew Jackson, although some supported the opposition Whigs. Beyond voting, some Irish took part in the tumultuous tasks of organizing parties and propagating their respective parties' causes. Others ran for office, and a few managed to get elected to local government bodies.

Chapter 7 demonstrates that the Irish involvement in southern politics did not go unchallenged. Many natives resented "Paddy's" political activism. This opposition reached its peak during the 1850s when the American Know-Nothing Party spread through the South. Despite violence and a number of nativist victories, the Irish survived this challenge to their integration. There were a number of reasons why the Irish outlived the

Know-Nothings in the South, but the major one was that they, unlike their nativist opponents, were sound on the issue that had become a litmus test for every southern politician — slavery. Chapter 8 explores the complex relationship the Irish had with slaves and the institution of slavery. Their basic support for the “peculiar institution” was vital to the tolerance extended to the Irish by native whites in the region. The chapter also attempts to explain why the Irish supported an institution to the point of supporting the breakup of the United States, though most never owned slaves.

The greatest test for Irish fidelity to the South came in 1861 with the outbreak of the Civil War. Thousands of Irish men joined the Confederate army to prove just that. As with the Irish in the North and other immigrant groups throughout American history, war gave the Irish in the South a great opportunity to display how well they had acclimated to their new home. Chapter 9 emphasizes that the Irish were eager to show their loyalty. Through forming and enlisting in distinctly Irish units, they wanted every native Confederate to know how solidly they too were behind the southern cause. The Irish in gray had a distinguished, if somewhat mixed, record in Confederate service. For many, it symbolized the consolidation of their integrated position in southern society.

Chapter 10 demonstrates that the slow Confederate defeat challenged that integration, because southern identity itself received a severe battering during the conflict. Support from home was crucial to the Irish soldiers’ morale. When support began to turn to disillusionment and calls to quit under the pressure of the Yankee blockade — and later invasion and occupation — morale crumbled. At the war’s end, slavery no longer existed and now southern politics could potentially become biracial. The Irish had to integrate into a “new” defeated and conquered South.

During Reconstruction, covered here in Chapter 11, the Irish again demonstrated their loyalty to the South. Reconstruction completed their integration into southern society. They continued to retain aspects of their Irishness, principally their Catholic faith, but did not see this continued ethnic identity as a detriment to their acceptance in southern society. By 1877, the Irish had become part of the southern mainstream and were able to continue on their path to assimilation — and thus disappear from southern history.²⁹

In my conclusion, I attempt to account for this transformation from “stranger” to “southerner.” The Irish were indeed strangers and added an extra dynamic to the class, racial, and religious tensions inherent in Old South society. The fact that they were able to overcome their ethnicity while not abandoning their distinctness points to a certain resilience among the immigrants but also to a tolerance among natives. It

seems that in at least one aspect the “mind of the antebellum south” had not discarded Thomas Jefferson’s values.³⁰ The Irish embraced this tolerance, which gave them the chance to enjoy the liberty and opportunity they had never known in Ireland. Ironically, their newfound freedom, like that of the original European settlers of the American South, was linked to the oppression of a large section of the population.³¹ The Irish too indulged in that particularly American paradox of espousing freedom while simultaneously endorsing second-class treatment for another ethnic group. On an individual level many Irish did “push the envelope” on racial matters, but they rarely challenged the values of the Solid South and thus sealed their position as denizens of the New South.

CHAPTER ONE

THE IRISH DIASPORA

Like the Jews, to whom the term “diaspora” was first applied, the Irish also scattered to many countries throughout the world. The concept of flight, however, distinguishes a diaspora from general immigration. “Diaspora” implies that the migration was in some way involuntary. This perception of forced migration is a strong element in the folklore of Irish immigration. Even Irish people who made rational economic decisions to leave Ireland often felt that they had no choice at all. This fact was particularly true in the greatest period of Irish emigration — the nineteenth century. Most of the millions who left the island in this period were economic migrants. Most believed, however, that they were political exiles, driven out by Britain’s misrule of their homeland. Thus, the Irish migrants who arrived in the United States were highly politicized. Upon arrival, they were already cognizant of not just the economic contrasts between America and Ireland but also the political differences. The Irish who came to the American South saw not only the variances between the two countries but also those between their new region and Ireland. Despite the harsh realities of immigrant life in the South, Irish immigrants’ awareness of the contrast did not dissipate. Whatever calamity befell them, at least they were no longer under the heel of Irish landlords and the British legal and military regime that had enforced their misrule. Understanding why they left and what they perceived they had left behind is vital to comprehending the Irish immigrant experience in the nineteenth-century South.

“The Flight of the Earls” in 1607, when the leaders of Ireland’s great sixteenth-century native rebellion abandoned their lands for friendlier Spain, began the tradition of England’s interference in Ireland equaling Irish exile. Their flight provided an example for other unsuccessful rebels to follow. The soldiers defeated in trying to restore the Catholic King James II to his throne in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution became famous as the “Wild Geese” when they left Ireland to join various European armies. Their defeat affirmed William of Orange as the new king of England, Scotland, and Ireland. In Ireland his victory ushered in

the era of the Ascendancy, a minority Anglican ruling class. The Ascendancy wanted to make sure that Catholic Ireland never again flexed its military or political muscle. Through their parliament in Dublin, members of the Ascendancy systematically kept Catholics, and Dissenters, out of political power. Dismissing Catholics as dangerous ignorant papists, they passed a series of discriminatory religious, economic, and political “penal laws” and made the majority of the Irish population second-class citizens in their own country.¹

Resentment among the disfranchised remained, however. Although the 1690 victory was more complete than any other English attempt to control the Catholic native Irish, the victors did not eradicate or expel the defeated. In many parts of Ireland, Catholics remained on or close to their ancestral lands. Here a culture of alienation grew among the old landed elites who longed nostalgically for the good old days before the interference of the horrible foreigners from England. This disaffection was best illustrated in the contemporary Gaelic poetry. Poets railed against “Saxon curs,” “Luther’s followers,” and “Calvin’s mob.” In their poems, the misfortune these foreigners had brought on Ireland made the Irish people the most oppressed in the world. Only the Jews, one Dublin writer believed, were more unfortunate and more ensnared in “daoirse” (slavery) than the Irish.² This resentment permeated the popular culture of the poorer Irish. Even those who managed to survive the sporadically enforced penal laws and restore some form of economic prosperity remained aware of the previous dispossession and the continued potential of their return to abject poverty.³

The majority of Ireland’s Catholics did live in poverty. Ireland endured two major famines, and barely avoided several more, in the eighteenth century. Outbursts of agrarian violence were common and occasionally substantial.⁴ Escape to the New World in the eighteenth century did not provide the opportunities that it would in the nineteenth century. Those who ended up in the American colonies usually had not chosen to go there. According to Kerby Miller, approximately 100,000 Irish Catholics “emigrated” to the British American colonies in the eighteenth century. Quickly finding themselves handicapped by “poverty, bond service and the recruiting sergeant,” Irish Catholic colonials tended to work as indentured servants, to be convicts, or to serve as members of the British armed forces. They usually “toiled in obscure places for hard taskmasters” and lived rather “brutish lives.” Miller believes that these emigrants were “rootless” in “familial and cultural” terms, because they usually emigrated as individuals rather than as family units. They were dispersed throughout the colonies, and by necessity English became their public language. Their families at home in Ireland, however, continued to speak

Gaelic.⁵ They also lost their Catholicism. Having left an Ireland with a very weak church structure for the colonies, where Catholicism barely existed, migrants who wanted any religious solace had to become Protestant. Nineteenth-century Irish clerics who came to the South determined not to let contemporary immigrants go the way of their eighteenth-century predecessors. Because of the previous cultural breakdown and resulting disappearance of their relatives and friends, the Irish conceived of America as a dark place of exile where loved ones were never heard from again.

A second group of Irish people perceived America differently. They did not take as long to become enamored with North America. The Protestant residents of the northern part of Ireland, whose ancestors had come from Scotland and England and who had been “planted” (i.e., settled on land seized from the native Irish by the English Crown) in the province of Ulster since the early 1600s, saw America more as an escape than an exile.⁶ These Ulster folk, known in popular terms as the “Scots Irish,” were predominantly Presbyterian.⁷ Their religious dissent led the Anglican-dominated Irish parliament to discriminate against them, despite the Dissenters’ crucial role in King William’s victory in Ireland. The Anglican rulers of eighteenth-century Ireland saw the Ulster Presbyterians as a serious threat to their power and influence, because, unlike the disfranchised Irish Catholics, Dissenters remained a vociferous political force. The authorities passed a series of laws that withdrew official recognition of Dissenter marriages and made nonattendance at Anglican services and nonrecognition of Anglican episcopal authority prosecutable offenses. In 1704, the Test Act stated that all public officeholders had to take sacraments in the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. Despite the passage of the Toleration Act in 1719, Church of Ireland clergy and politicians continued to discriminate against Presbyterians.⁸

Along with religious persecution, Ulster Presbyterians also faced economic hardship. With the acquiescence of the Ascendancy, English protectionism restricted Irish wool exports. This action brought about the growth of and subsequent dependence upon a linen industry in Ulster. Periodic crises in the linen industry led to falling prices for flax, increased rents, and ultimately evictions. The Scots Irish settlers, therefore, faced two prospects: stay and resist prejudice and economic uncertainty, or, like their ancestors, begin a new life somewhere else. Thousands opted for the latter.⁹

One positive effect of the linen industry on the Scots Irish proved to be increased communication with the American colonies. Ships arriving at Derry and Belfast gave the Scots Irish an opportunity to catch the return trip to New York City or Philadelphia. Around 250,000 Irish Presbyter-

rians came to America via this route in the eighteenth century. They immigrated primarily to New York and Pennsylvania, where they settled in uninhabited lands in the west. Later in the century, some of the Scots Irish migrated through the Shenandoah Valley to the backcountries of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. The Scots Irish thrived well in the southern colonies, and three North Carolina governors actively welcomed them. Arthur Dobbs, governor from 1754 to 1765 and himself a native of Carrickfergus, County Antrim, Ulster, recruited settlers from Ireland and other colonies.¹⁰ By 1761, the Scots Irish filled the South Carolina piedmont. Andrew Pickens and John Pickens Jr. followed the typical pattern of Scots Irish migration within the colonies. They had been justices of the peace in Augusta County, Virginia, in 1745; they moved to the Waxhaws in South Carolina by 1751 and on to the Savannah River valley by 1762.¹¹

Scots Irish emigration peaked between 1770 and 1775, but it did not disappear. Between 1851 and 1855, over 44,000 people left the predominantly Presbyterian counties of Antrim and Down for the United States. Many of these migrants were native Catholic Irish, but some were from a Dissenter background. For example, Robert McElderry of Lynchburg, Virginia, a Protestant migrant from County Antrim, kept a steady correspondence with his relatives in Ireland in the 1850s. He boasted that every "Sabbath" he went to a Presbyterian service in the morning and a Methodist one in the evening. Benjamin Wilson left Belfast in 1839. He settled in Randolph County, Alabama, and eventually helped found a Presbyterian church in Atlanta, Georgia.¹² The majority of the Scots Irish, however, had taken part in the American Revolution and in the politics of the new nation. On the whole, they had been avid patriots. Their memories of oppression in Ireland made them zealots for American freedom and supporters of a democratic American culture. Thus, they played an important role in creating a distinctive American society.¹³

They and their fellow Americans' efforts for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" had a profound impact on their old country. The American Revolution impressed Irish people of every class and faith. Some feared its ideology, while others embraced it. Ironically, the political changes of revolution and independence, brought about in large part by the Scots Irish, changed the attitude of the native Catholic Irish toward America. Patriot leaders like Benjamin Franklin and John Adams tried to encourage a reciprocal revolution in Ireland. The republican rhetoric of the new United States appealed to the Irish who resented British dominance of their affairs. Gaelic poets eulogized the efforts of George Washington in his fight against the "Boors of Britain." One poet rejoiced at "the sturdy Washington[']s" victories over the "arrogant robbers." The

future president's endeavors earned him comparisons to such great Irish heroes as Brian Boru, an eleventh-century high king, and Patrick Sarsfield, the dashing cavalry hero who had tried to halt William of Orange's invasion of Ireland.¹⁴

The more important impact, however, occurred among the Presbyterian population. With their familial links to America and their educational links with Scottish universities, many Presbyterian Ulstermen considered themselves educated men of the Enlightenment and the world. They admired the American patriot's struggle against despotism. When war broke out between the United States and Great Britain in 1776 and escalated in 1778 with the involvement of France, Ulster Presbyterians rallied to defend Ireland against a French/American invasion, but many secretly admired the American patriots. Despite the initial promise of Irish legislative independence (granted by Great Britain in 1782 to ensure Ireland's loyalty), these Ulster Protestants had become frustrated by the continued political and economic interference from London, particularly patronage and the reluctance of the still Ascendancy-dominated parliament in Dublin to pass real reform. This political frustration caused bitterness, which began to overshadow the Protestants' harsh memories of bloody Catholic uprisings. The Catholics had not done anything to harm Presbyterians in over eighty years. All the insults and injuries, it seemed, now came from an Anglican Ascendancy ancien régime propped up by the British government.¹⁵

The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 turned frustration into action. It was one thing for Americans raised in a tradition of liberty to throw off the yoke of a despot, but for the French to also do it, that was something different. If the people of Papist France, whose government epitomized autocracy, could become enlightened and embrace the concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity, then why not Ireland? Perhaps, the Dissenters believed, the same metamorphosis could occur among Irish Catholics. Presbyterian Belfast celebrated Bastille Day with great gusto, and in 1791 a group of republican-France supporters with the aid of some Protestants from Dublin founded the Society of United Irishmen. Their aim was to unite Catholic, Protestant (Anglican), and Dissenter in Ireland's cause.¹⁶

The Anglo-Irish Ascendancy definitely recognized the threat to its power. An alliance of the Ulster Presbyterian Enlightenment ideology and Catholic peasant unrest was a potent concoction. In 1793 Dublin authorities banned the society and drove many of its leaders overseas. All the crackdown accomplished was to move the United Irishmen from radical ideas to radical actions. Exiled to the United States and France, they plotted revolution. In Ireland the society went underground and

continued to grow. Rebellion eventually broke out in May 1798, first in the Catholic southeast and later the Presbyterian northeast. After some initial success the rebels met their demise at Vinegar Hill, County Wexford, and Ballinahinch, County Down. A minor French invasion in the west in the late summer was also unsuccessful. There were swift reprisals. Mass execution and deportation were the order of the day. Casualties in the rebellion and its aftermath totaled around 30,000.¹⁷ Many towns had been destroyed during the trouble, and the estimated property damage amounted to over £1 million. One witness of the rebellion's aftermath remarked: "In the capital the streets were crowded with the widows and orphans of those who had fallen in battle. In the country, I beheld villages everywhere burned and razed to the ground."¹⁸

The physical and economic consequences were great enough, but the political repercussions were even greater. The United Irishmen had politicized many sections of the Irish population. They created Irish republicanism and made violent struggle against British rule a central tenet of that philosophy. They also made Ireland's struggle with Great Britain part of the international confrontation between "liberty" and "tyranny." Although defeated, many of them took their ideas with them to Europe and, more important for this story, to the United States. The majority of these men were poor Catholics, but one refugee described himself and his fellow migrants as "the most respectable emigration which has taken place to your United States since the settlement of New England."¹⁹

They, along with some predecessors who had fled to America to avoid government crackdowns before 1798, had an immediate impact on American politics. Their belief in the universal tenets of republicanism helped them adapt rapidly to the tumult of American politics. The United Irish exiles had an instant affinity with their fellow republicans in America. Once settled in the United States, these former rebels naturally joined with the Republican faction of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Their idealism resembled that of Jefferson, and politicians like Jefferson courted their support. This alliance, however, alienated the rival Federalists. Led by President John Adams and Alexander Hamilton, the Federalists feared that foreigners imbued with revolutionary zeal would help the Republicans gain power and push America into war against the European monarchies. To counter this possibility they introduced the Alien and Sedition Acts to destroy all "radical foreign ideas." It seemed to many Irish immigrants that the United States was abandoning its position as the beacon of liberty and republicanism in a tyrannical world. Jefferson's election to the presidency in 1800, however, calmed Irish Americans' fears. With Jefferson in office, they did not have to worry about deportation back to despotic and war-torn Europe. They moved even

closer to him and his Republican successors.²⁰ Thus, they integrated relatively easily and could retain an interest in removing Britain's dominance of Ireland without any fear of being considered "un-American."²¹

These men became the core of Irish leadership in early-nineteenth-century America. Many of them prospered in cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston and acquired respectability in the early republic. Their accepted position in American society eased the tension created by the arrival of their poorer countrymen after 1798. As members of various Hibernian societies throughout the country, they also took it upon themselves to aid the poorest immigrants. This aid consolidated their position as leaders of Irish America among their own and among the native population. They also influenced later immigrants in another way. Because they were active in politics, particularly in political journalism, they published numerous defenses of the 1798 rebellion and the justice of the United Irish cause. They portrayed Irish history as one long litany of English oppression.²² They thus shaped the Irish American consciousness to their philosophy. The Irish in America, including the South, became the keepers of the "spirit of '98."

The rebellion also had a major impact on politics in Ireland. Members of the British government were very upset with the Ascendancy authorities for sparking a rebellion and a French invasion in their backyard while the British were embroiled in a life-and-death struggle with revolutionary France. Their solution was a political one—the abolition of the Irish Parliament and Union with Britain. British prime minister William Pitt recognized that legitimate political grievances had fueled the rebellion and aimed to remedy them by also introducing Catholic Emancipation, that is, removal of the last restrictions on Catholic participation in politics, mainly the right to sit in the new unified Parliament at Westminster. Ascendancy opposition and, more important, the opposition of King George III killed Catholic Emancipation. The new Union of Great Britain and Ireland, which came into effect in 1801, had little to offer Irish Catholics. They quickly perceived that the Union was an instrument to preserve Protestant dominance. This perception was enhanced when Irish Protestants, including increasing numbers of Dissenters, also saw the Union in that light. Many Irish Protestants had been reluctant to give up "their" parliament, but they quickly became ardent Unionists embracing the concept that the Union turned the massive Catholic majority in Ireland into a minority in the United Kingdom.²³

Initially, however, there was an economic bonus for Ireland under the Union. Napoleon Bonaparte's victories on the European continent and his introduction of the Continental System denied the United Kingdom access to European food exports and forced Britain to rely on Irish pro-

duce for survival. This increased demand increased agricultural prices, and Ireland, still overwhelmingly agricultural, enjoyed, in Irish terms, an extraordinary prosperity.²⁴ In 1815, however, when combined British and Prussian forces defeated Bonaparte at the Battle of Waterloo, the Napoleonic Wars in Europe ended, and the Irish boom ended as well. Peace cut the British demand for Irish food; falling demand drove down prices for Irish produce and, more important, decreased the incomes of the largest section of the Irish population — tenant farmers. This great victory, therefore, created severe problems for the Irish people, plunging the predominantly agricultural Irish Catholic economy into an agricultural recession.²⁵ In 1817 one southern American visitor to Ireland admired the scenery of the country but was shocked by the “distress” he saw and said he hoped that Ireland would “throw off the influence of Britain” to achieve reform.²⁶

The prices for Irish goods in Europe continued to decline between 1816 and the mid-1830s. Increased taxation by the British government to pay off war debts exacerbated Ireland’s economic woes. Because of falling prices and rising taxes, Irish tenants expanded production, thereby causing even lower prices and more rent payment defaults. Many were reduced to the status of landless laborers who barely lived above subsistence levels. The continued payment of tithes by a predominantly Catholic population to support the Anglican Church of Ireland increased frustration further. Evictions and rural unrest grew throughout the 1820s and 1830s. Groups such as the “Rockites” exacted revenge on local landlords by burning barns and killing livestock. British authorities responded with public order measures, but they could do little to halt extralegal activities of these disaffected Catholics.²⁷

This disaffection increased the sectarian nature of Irish politics. While the institutional Catholic Church did not possess the power and influence it would have later in the nineteenth century, there was among the laity an increasing awareness of being Catholic. They might not have been very orthodox in their religious belief or practice, but Irish Catholics were very aware of the differences between them and their Protestant neighbors.²⁸ Along with the obvious discrepancies in economic and political status, an outburst of Protestant evangelicalism early in the century clearly exacerbated religious differences. Influenced by a growing millennialism, Protestants of all hues in Britain and Ireland founded “mission” societies to proselytize among the Irish Catholics and prepare them for the impending second coming. Many Catholics responded by endorsing their own millennial “Pastorini” prophecies, which were written under a *nom de plume* by an English Catholic bishop in 1771 and predicted the violent destruction of Protestantism in 1825. As that date approached, the

“prophecy” had a particular resonance among many Catholics, which in turn antagonized many Irish Protestants.²⁹

Into this uneasy atmosphere arrived Daniel O’Connell, who organized Catholics to agitate for Catholic Emancipation. His Catholic Association, founded in 1823 and based on both mass and elite support, in its various guises gave Irish Catholics their first taste of political success when Westminster passed Catholic Emancipation for Ireland in 1829. From that year onward there would always be an Irish Catholic interest in Parliament. Emancipation, however, was no panacea. Economic grievances involving rents and tithes remained. Increasingly, large sections of the Irish population were reduced to subsistence agriculture and reliance on the potato. The minuscule size of further reform, particularly considering the high expectations Irish Catholics had of the “Great Reform” Whig governments of the 1830s and early 1840s, made for an increase in agrarian unrest. The seeming unattainableness of O’Connell’s new plan to solve Ireland’s problems—repeal of the Act of Union—only heightened tensions that would reach extreme levels later in the 1840s when the unparalleled disaster of the Great Famine struck Ireland.³⁰

In contrast to Ireland, the fledgling United States saw the post-1815 period as one of triumph. General Andrew Jackson’s victory over British forces at the Battle of New Orleans and the Treaty of Ghent that ended the War of 1812 created a new air of confidence throughout the country. An initial sense of relief among the young republic’s citizens turned into what one historian has described as “an exultant nationalism.”³¹ Americans began to “turn their backs on Europe” and concentrate on territorial and economic expansion. They initiated market and transportation revolutions. They believed they were entering an “era of good feelings.”³² In 1823 future president John Quincy Adams wrote that the period since the War of 1812 had been “the golden age of the republic.”³³

People in Ireland were aware of the contrast between their bleak lives and those of the newly confident Americans. In the years 1815 and 1816 alone, over 20,000 Irish emigrants left for North America, most of whom settled in the United States.³⁴ This contrast, along with the success of the United Irish exiles, made America very attractive to the Irish. It became natural, therefore, for the majority of Irish emigrants to leave for the United States when their economic situation worsened in 1815. A temporary respite in the Irish depression in 1835 and the American Panic of 1837 halted emigration for a few years, but it began to rise again in the 1840s. By 1844, the eve of the Great Famine, average Irish emigration since 1815 had increased to 33,000 per year. In the thirty years after 1815, between 800,000 and 1,000,000 people left Ireland for the United States, about twice the total for the preceding 200 years.³⁵

Many of these Irish immigrants went to work on the canals and railroads that were a part of the growing American economy.³⁶ The Irish “digger” discovered America by following the routes of inland waterways. The Erie, Hudson, and Delaware canals, constructed in the 1820s, brought the Irish into the backcountry, where they often settled to dig coal.³⁷ The majority of the migrants, however, stayed in the *entrepôts*. In 1820 there were close to 25,000 Irish people in New York City, and by 1844 it was, as one immigrant commented, “the most Irish city in the Union.”³⁸

This large Irish influx to America paled in comparison with the immigration later caused by the Great Famine. Most Irish tenant farmers depended on the potato as their staple diet. When the leaves of the potato crop began to turn black because of blight in 1845, catastrophe loomed. The partial failure of the crop in 1845 was followed by its total destruction in 1846 and 1848. One contemporary stated that the Irish countryside “appeared from sea to sea one mass of unvaried rottenness and decay.”³⁹ Partial failures continued until 1854. Between 1.1 million and 1.5 million people died from hunger. The British parliament hampered relief efforts as its members haggled over free-trade policy while “Rome burned” in Ireland.⁴⁰ When relief came, it arrived with strings attached. The infamous “Gregory quarter-acre clause” added to the Irish Poor Law in 1847 forced any tenant who rented more than a quarter acre to give up his homestead and his holding if he wanted relief. If a tenant refused relief, he and his family faced starvation. If he sought relief it meant eviction, which in turn meant homelessness or finding a place in the already overcrowded and disease-ridden poorhouses. This clause aided landlords in making mass clearances of their estates. One witness described it thus: “A more complete engine for the slaughter and expatriation of a people was never designed.”⁴¹ The British authorities and their Anglo-Irish allies saw the catastrophe not as an unmitigated disaster but as a “heaven-sent ‘opportunity’ to deconstruct Irish society and rebuild it anew.”⁴²

Increased emigration joined mortality to reduce Ireland’s population dramatically. Over 2 million people left the island, 70 percent destined for the United States.⁴³ These famine immigrants brought with them what one historian has called the “ultimate psychological legacy of the great hunger,” a profound hatred of England and its control of Ireland.⁴⁴ They saw the famine, particularly in light of support for things such as the Gregory clause, not as a natural disaster, but as an artificial one, callously or even deliberately created by the British government. Virulently anti-British Irish leaders such as John Mitchel, a political writer who encouraged rebellion against British rule in Ireland and who later settled in the

American South, saw the Great Famine as an act of genocide. Patriots escaping the British authorities and famine immigrants introduced their belief in British genocide to the Irish Americans who had migrated to the United States before 1845. The newcomers had great success in instilling this hatred in their compatriots.⁴⁵ Irish exiles in America would keep violent nationalism alive and continue to make the Irish problem an international one.

Irish emigration to America continued to rise until 1855, when it was severely disrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War. By 1860, there were 1,611,304 Irish natives living in America, the state of New York alone having 498,072 Irish residents, 12.8 percent of its population. Reflecting the disruption of the Civil War and the end of the Great Famine, the Irish population in the United States in 1870 had increased only to 1,855,827. Like their predecessors, famine immigrants tended to congregate in the large urban areas along the eastern seaboard. New York City had 203,740 Irish people in 1860, making up 25 percent of the population, while Boston, Massachusetts, had 45,991 Irish residents, also making up 25 percent of its population. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, Maryland, also had large groups of Irish immigrants in 1860.⁴⁶

Many Irish did manage to move away from the entrepôts to seek opportunities in the interior. Land in the Midwest attracted some, river transport bringing them to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and the upper Mississippi River valley. The Irish of Illinois numbered 27,786 in 1850 and 87,573 ten years later. Missouri's Irish population grew from 21,043 to 49,961 in the same decade and Iowa's from 4,885 to 28,072.⁴⁷ Like their compatriots on the eastern seaboard, however, the midwestern Irish gravitated toward urban areas. For example, nearly 60 percent of Missouri's Irish lived in St. Louis, and nearly 70 percent of Ohio's Irish lived in Cleveland and Cincinnati.⁴⁸

Such large numbers of Irish people coming to America over a relatively short period had a significant effect on nineteenth-century America. Irish immigrants were very active in the American economy, politics, and the Catholic Church. It was in the urban centers that the Irish in the United States really made their mark. There they also encountered their greatest difficulties. As the new republic's first major foreign immigrants, the Irish were not welcomed. The fact that they were Catholics was particularly troublesome to many natives. Thus, the Irish in America faced discrimination and ostracism that confined them to the lowest rung of the socioeconomic ladder. They lived in the worst neighborhoods, did the worst work, suffered the highest mortality rates, and were overrepresented in prisons, poorhouses, and mental asylums. To survive they

turned inward, refusing to integrate. They embraced their ghetto status. They had their churches, societies, and a continued interest in Irish politics to keep them going. This isolation, however, merely perpetuated their position at the bottom of American society.⁴⁹

This still-popular view of the Irish in America is challenged when one looks at the Irish experience outside of the Northeast. The historians of the Irish in Chicago found parallels there with the story of the immigrant's tough life in Boston, but the less rigid society of the Midwest provided the Irish greater opportunity for success. Ultimately, those historians conclude that the Irish in America embraced their chances for upward mobility, gained affluence, and assumed a full role in American society.⁵⁰ Similarly, a study of the Irish in San Francisco shows that the Irish there were also confident and upwardly mobile. Despite a virulent nativist movement, the Irish thrived in California and played an integral role in local communities there. San Francisco elected its first Irish mayor in 1867, almost twenty years before Boston and New York.⁵¹

Despite these positive examples, the pessimistic view of the Irish in America has not died. Supporting his concept of Irish immigrants as members of a diaspora, Kerby Miller has used thousands of immigrant letters to highlight how difficult a time the famine Irish had in adjusting to America. The typical Irish man who landed in the United States before 1860, Miller believes, came from a peasant quasi-collectivist society to a country where the people were enraptured with capitalism and rampant individualism. The contrast between the dynamic, urban, modern, and Protestant United States and the conservative, rural, traditional, and Catholic experience of the Irish emigrant was too much of a dislocation to allow for easy integration. On the contrary, the famine-generation Irish Americans were isolated and longed for home. They stayed in America not by choice but because of economic necessity. Rather than adapting quickly to the bustling United States, they remained exiles, depending for survival in a very strange land on their Church and on dreams of returning home to free Ireland from British rule. This inward-turning ghettoization isolated them even further from the American mainstream.⁵²

Miller's view remains controversial. His analysis seems overgeneralized. Everything from his motives to his methodology has been seriously challenged. In particular he seems to have overemphasized the differences between Irish Catholics and Protestants.⁵³ Nonetheless, many who have shown a more successful Irish experience in America accept his basic premise. They agree that the Irish were insecure and self-segregated, but they see strength in numbers. By concentrating in urban areas, the Irish in the United States took over their towns and cities. Their

heightened ethnic awareness made them stick together and forge success out of difficult circumstances. Where the Irish failed to concentrate and exploit their numbers, they usually met with less success.⁵⁴

The Irish who came to the American South between 1815 and 1861 would not have the advantage of numbers. They were very much a minority in their new southern homes. They, too, like their counterparts in other parts of America, had been exposed to the traumatic politics and catastrophic economics of early nineteenth-century Ireland. They saw themselves as a part of the great Irish diaspora. They were susceptible to the anti-British republicanism of the survivors of '98. The majority, who came in the aftermath of the famine, were particularly affected by their Irish experiences. They were very aware of their unique position in a Western World enjoying an unheralded prosperity. Despite being a part of the richest country in the world, they had been exposed to 1 million of their countrymen and women dying of hunger, a catastrophe that "their" government had described as "the direct stroke of an all wise Providence."⁵⁵ Arrival by the Irish in a region as alien as any in the United States only heightened their ethnic awareness, and it could have pushed them even further into cultural isolation. It would not have been surprising if the Irish in the South, under pressure from a dominant Protestant majority, had jettisoned their diasporic baggage and sacrificed their Irishness for native acceptance. They did not, however, commit cultural suicide. Irish immigrants found themselves a niche in southern society where they could retain aspects of their heritage, while at the same time consolidating their position as members of the community. They found their greatest opportunity for integration in the burgeoning towns and cities of the Old South.

CHAPTER TWO

URBAN PIONEERS IN THE OLD SOUTH

Most Irish immigrants in the South, like their northern compatriots from the Emerald Isle, were urban pioneers.¹ The greatest Irish influx to the United States occurred simultaneously with the amazing growth of cities. The first chronicler of the Irish diaspora in America, John Francis Maguire, M.P., lamented the “evil consequences of the unhappy tendency of the Irish to congregate in the large towns of America.” Surprised by this phenomenon, he wrote: “In no country have the peasantry exhibited a stronger or more passionate attachment to the land.”²

Although Maguire was referring to the large cities of the northeastern and mid-Atlantic states, this Irish “tendency” also applied to the South. Maguire should not have been so surprised at this attraction of immigrants to towns. Most Irish immigrants in America were escaping from the land. The rural life from which they had fled had provided nothing but heartache. They had firsthand knowledge of how precarious life there could be. Similarly, life in the nineteenth-century rural South did not have many attractions for the freshly arrived immigrant. Numbers of them may have dreamt of owning their own farms, but they were not prepared for the isolation of the southern backcountry. This reality quickly dashed aspirations of proprietorship among many. Getting started in farming was also a problem, particularly the cash-crop variety, which most Irish contemplating a rural life would have wanted instead of the subsistence farming they already knew. Raising cash crops required substantial capital investment.³ Arriving with ready capital for venture in good cotton land was an impossibility for the vast majority of the Irish immigrating to the South. Many had barely escaped Ireland with their lives. Most of the Irish who did manage to acquire farms, and in a few instances plantations, were not famine migrants but earlier migrants. They combated isolation by forming Irish settlements. Their behavior shows that even the Irish still attracted to the agrarian life longed for contact with their compatriots. Just as in the cities, the Irish in the southern coun-

tryside saw the economic, social, and cultural value of creating their own ethnic communities.

In contrast to the solitude of the backcountry, the vitality of southern towns attracted Irish immigrants. Opportunity was greater there for the penniless immigrant than in the countryside. Historian Leonard Curry found that the antebellum South had “considerable commercial enterprise, some interest in manufacturing,” and an antebellum urban growth rate not that dissimilar from those of the northern states.⁴ David Goldfield discovered that in urban Virginia “the role of cities was crucial” to the advance of southern interests. Famous southern propagandists such as J. D. B. De Bow and George Fitzhugh actively “encouraged urban development as means to sectional strength.”⁵ The Irish thus arrived in the South during a period of rapid urban development and looked to exploit the opportunities this growth offered. If southern cities had been larger, it is very likely that more Irish would have settled in the region.

An examination of the ethnic Irish newspapers from the large Irish communities in the Northeast gives us insight into why the Irish may have been attracted to the urban South. These newspapers’ opinions are particularly important because many Irish who settled in the South had not gone directly there from Ireland but had landed in a northern or Canadian port first. The most influential Irish American newspapers were based in New York City and Boston. The New York City *Irish American* and the Boston *Pilot*, which eventually fell under the control of the Catholic Diocese of Boston, had large circulations. One editor of the *Irish American* estimated his newspaper’s circulation at 100,000, even though he sold only 20,000. The editor believed that the paper passed through the hands of four individuals beyond the buyer. He may have inflated this figure to attract advertisers, but considering the vital need Irish migrants had for information about their new country and for news from Ireland (see Chapter 4), his calculation may not have been too badly exaggerated.⁶

Both the *Irish American* and the *Pilot* published numerous articles on opportunities for the Irish immigrant. The Midwest received the most positive articles, but the South received its share as well, particularly in terms of work available in public works schemes. The papers did not advocate the region’s agricultural potential to their immigrant readership. In 1836 a correspondent for the *Pilot* stated in an article: “In Louisiana, alone, not less than 20,000 of those emigrants [arriving] could gain constant and well-paid employment.” In 1854 the *Irish American* noted that in New Orleans the great wage of “[t]hree dollars a day is the current price paid for ten to twelve hours work.” Mobile, Alabama, was considered even better than its sister port on the Gulf of Mexico. In 1849,

Georgia had received similar praise, because “she exhibits an enterprise rarely equaled in the South.”⁷ This praise for the South contrasted with criticism of the Northeast, where “the emigrant who remains [there] . . . has not the same opportunities for employment” as elsewhere.⁸

An increase in direct links with the South during the famine period only augmented the South’s attractiveness to the Irish. News traveled back to the departure ports of the prosperous nature of America and how much better it was than Ireland. Ships from Wexford town, for example, began taking immigrants to Savannah and Charleston during the famine period, and many captains and passengers sent back favorable reports. One shipmaster noted that there was “abundant employment” in Savannah. A passenger by the name of McLaughlin wrote to the local newspaper at home informing everyone that, upon arrival in the Georgia city, “Every passenger was engaged before he left the vessel at wages varying from one and [a] quarter dollars for labourers; and tradesmen one and [a] half to two dollars per day.” He closed his remarks commenting: “This is the finest city I was ever in.”⁹

At first observation, however, the Irish in the South seem to have ignored the possibilities for success in the South and had little impact upon the region. Despite a large famine-induced influx after 1845, the Irish remained a negligible part of the region’s total population (see Table 1). As a percentage of the white population, the Irish-born portion exceeded 2 percent only in Louisiana, the state with the largest numbers of Irish. These percentages are deceptive, for they hide the true picture of the Irish presence in the South. Most Irish immigrants, both before and after the Great Famine, concentrated in southern towns and cities. Although contemporary observers often disparaged them for their true poverty and alleged ignorance, the Irish population was still large enough by 1860 to be an important part of the southern urban experience.

The Irish in the South before 1845, however, were more likely than the famine immigrants to buy land and participate directly in the antebellum agricultural boom, although, as it would be for their successors, urban life proved irresistible to most of them. These early migrants came to the South from many different directions. Some arrived directly from Ireland. In March 1820, *Prince Leopold* from Belfast docked at Charleston, South Carolina, to deliver twenty-one young Irish people from Ulster to their new home.¹⁰ The previous year, John Phillips of Lisburn, County Antrim, had made the same trip and found it to be a pleasant and uneventful journey. He was glad, however, to arrive in Charleston, where several gentlemen, upon hearing he was from Lisburn, treated him with great hospitality. Phillips’s story indicates the continued Scots Irish influence on the Carolinas. Undoubtedly, this link that the eighteenth-

TABLE 1. Irish Population of the South as a Percentage of the Total and White Populations in 1850 and 1860

| | 1850 | | 1860 | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Irish % of Total Population | Irish % of White Population | Irish % of Total Population | Irish % of White Population |
| South | 0.78 | 1.26 | 0.98 | 1.56 |
| Alabama | 0.47 | 0.85 | 0.59 | 1.08 |
| Arkansas | 0.24 | 0.31 | 0.30 | 0.40 |
| Florida | 1.00 | 1.86 | 0.59 | 1.06 |
| Georgia | 0.35 | 0.61 | 0.62 | 1.11 |
| Louisiana | 4.69 | 9.50 | 3.98 | 7.89 |
| Mississippi | 0.32 | 0.65 | 0.49 | 1.10 |
| North Carolina | 0.06 | 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.14 |
| South Carolina | 0.60 | 1.48 | 0.71 | 1.70 |
| Tennessee | 0.26 | 0.35 | 1.12 | 1.51 |
| Texas | 0.66 | 0.91 | 0.57 | 0.82 |
| Virginia | 1.02 | 1.28 | 1.35 | 1.57 |

Sources: Dodd and Dodd, *Historical Statistics of the South, 1790-1970*, 2, 6, 14, 18, 26, 34, 38, 46, 50, 54, 58; De Bow, ed., *Statistical View of the United States: A Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 117; Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxix.

century Ulster immigrants had established helped attract the earliest of the post-1815 migrants who came directly to the South. Charleston, which had been a major port of colonial America, remained important until about 1830. It was the greatest southern entrepôt for Irish immigrants between 1815 and 1830, but others landed at Savannah, Richmond, Norfolk, Mobile, and New Orleans.¹¹

Many others went south after first arriving in New York City, in Canada, or elsewhere in North America. Those who landed and settled for a time in these areas sometimes came south overland and sometimes by river transport. For example, John Phelan brought his family from Brunswick, New Jersey, to Richmond, Virginia, and eventually to Huntsville, Alabama. There his son James, a future Confederate senator, was born in 1821. In 1833, Eugene Magevney left Pennsylvania to continue his teaching profession in Memphis, Tennessee; two years later, John McGrath successfully completed a more arduous journey from Newfoundland, Canada, to Selma, Alabama.¹²

This early Irish migration paled, however, in comparison to the famine-induced influx. After 1845 the Irish population in the South increased

TABLE 2. Number of Irish in the South in 1850 and 1860

| | Irish Population in 1850 | Irish Population in 1860 | % Change |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| South | 54,551 | 84,853 | +55.4 |
| Alabama | 3,639 | 5,664 | +55.6 |
| Arkansas | 514 | 1,312 | +155.3 |
| Florida | 878 | 827 | -5.8 |
| Georgia | 3,202 | 6,586 | +105.7 |
| Louisiana | 24,266 | 28,207 | +16.2 |
| Mississippi | 1,928 | 3,893 | +101.9 |
| North Carolina | 567 | 889 | +56.8 |
| South Carolina | 4,051 | 4,996 | +23.3 |
| Tennessee | 2,640 | 12,498 | +373.0 |
| Texas | 1,403 | 3,480 | +148.0 |
| Virginia | 11,463 | 16,501 | +44.1 |

Sources: Dodd and Dodd, *Historical Statistics of the South, 1790-1970*, 2, 6, 14, 18, 26, 34, 38, 46, 50, 54, 58; De Bow, ed., *Statistical View of the United States: A Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 117; Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxix.

dramatically. Between 1850 and 1860 the Irish population in the South grew by over 55 percent (see Table 2).

Numerous ships came directly to the South from Liverpool, England, the center of the cotton trade in Europe, and brought thousands of Irish immigrants who hoped to elude the ravages of the Great Famine. New Orleans was a popular entrepôt, because fares to it were among the cheapest to any U.S. destination. New Orleans was the United States' largest exporting port but not its largest importing port. The cotton ships returning from Liverpool for their next cargo were keen to fill their holds with anything they could, and the fleeing famine Irish supplied this need perfectly. Links between Liverpool and Ireland were prodigious, and travel to the city was one the cheapest fares out of Ireland. The city on the Mersey became one of the most Irish cities in the world. In the last quarter of 1845, the year before the worst effects of the Great Famine hit Ireland, 813 passengers from "Great Britain" arrived in New Orleans alone, most immigrants arriving in the late fall and winter to avoid the summer heat.¹³ In late 1846, the number of "British" arrivals to the city increased to 1,519. By the last quarter of 1847, the number of Irish fleeing the famine increased New Orleans arrivals to 3,621. In that year, known as "Black '47" in Irish folklore, during the normally quiet summer period of migration, 5,856 British passengers disembarked at New Orleans. Two years later, 7,272 people came from Britain to the Crescent

City. By 1850 New Orleans was second only to New York City as an entrepôt for foreign immigrants.¹⁴

The famine-era immigrants' experience crossing the Atlantic Ocean on what contemporaries often described as "coffin ships" could not have been more traumatic. In 1850, John Knox, a prosperous Ulster migrant, on his way to South Carolina via New York City, observed young stowaways being beaten by the first mate before the ship even left Liverpool. Later in the voyage, he was shocked when he saw that passengers from steerage who had looked healthy and clean now "looked sickly, and seem to have lost all regard for personal appearance." A couple of days later Knox saw members of the crew consign a child of one of the passengers "to a watery grave."¹⁵ If this experience traumatized someone traveling in better accommodations, the effects on the passengers in steerage must have been much greater. It could only have enhanced their bitterness toward those who they believed had driven them out of Ireland.

Migrants who sailed directly to the South did not find an easy life upon their arrival. For example, those who survived the shipwreck of the *Osborne* before reaching New Orleans in 1853 had no money or kin. Philanthropist Vere Foster advised them to go immediately to the British Consul for aid, adding, "otherwise, unless New Orleans itself be your destination, go at once to the interior of the country and scatter." Foster warned them: "Do not loiter until your money is spent, luggage held by boardinghouse[,] and you are thrown out on the street as beggars."¹⁶

Rose McCormack's family did not leave New Orleans after landing there in 1852. Following a rough ten-week voyage, they made it safely to their destination. Within a week, however, her mother and a brother, James, "died and were buried the very same day." Five days later, her father and another brother "died [of] a sort of cholera." The remaining children split up, and some of them did not see each other for twenty years.¹⁷ The famine Irish swarming over New Orleans's wharves and levees suffered severely. Disease claimed many new arrivals, and the local Catholic Orphan Asylum filled to capacity with orphans from the "Infirmary for Destitute Emigrants" on Esplanade Avenue.¹⁸

The situation at other southern entrepôts was not as dire as that in the Crescent City, but some of the immigrants who arrived at those ports were equally desperate. Mobile, like New Orleans, had grown because of the cotton boom, and in the late 1840s ships arriving from Liverpool brought thousands of Irish migrants to that town.¹⁹ Savannah, Georgia, had grown in significance, too, because of its position as the terminus of the Central Georgia Railroad. It also increased direct links with the British Isles, which enabled famine migrants to come directly to the city.²⁰

Like the prefamine immigrants, a large number of the newer migrants

did not come directly to southern towns but traveled south after having landed in the northern states or Canada first. Charleston's and Savannah's excellent links with northern ports made it easy for the Irish to get there from Atlantic ports farther north. A sizable section of Charleston's Irish immigrants came from New York City in the winter, when work was scarce there. Many returned north in the summer to avoid the dreaded southern heat.²¹ In 1849, a ship from New York City brought to Savannah a group of Irish migrants "so sick and weak they could scarcely support their own weight." Driven out by frozen harbors during the winter, numerous longshoremen came to Savannah from Canada in search of work.²²

Irish immigrants in the South who settled farther inland also often came from the northern states. For example, the birthplaces of the six children of Natchez, Mississippi, resident Patrick Wallace reflect his circuitous route to the Deep South. His eldest child Mary, age fourteen, was born in Ireland. John, age twelve, was born in Scotland, while James, age ten, joined the family in New York. Joseph, eight; Henry, six; and Thompson, four, saw light for the first time in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, respectively.²³ One can find similar patterns in the upper South. John Leary, a laborer in Richmond's second ward, made his way to Virginia via New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.²⁴

Along with avoiding the ravages of the "Great Hunger," the prefamine immigrants were also fortunate to have arrived in the South during its greatest economic boom. By 1820, short-staple upland cotton had surpassed all other southern produce in value. Despite volatile prices, the cotton supply continued to grow over the next three decades, nearly doubling in ten years. Since cotton was more versatile than rice, indigo, or sugar, and could be grown almost anywhere in the South, even small farmers could raise cotton to earn some cash.²⁵ In 1822, a former New Yorker and future governor of Mississippi, John A. Quitman, wrote ecstatically about the wealth of the cotton South and wondered: "Why did I not come here instead of stopping in Ohio? Money is [as] plenty here as it is scarce there."²⁶

Some Irish settlers took full advantage of this boom. Frederick Stanton and his family came to New Orleans from Belfast in 1818. On arriving in the Crescent City, they immediately removed to Natchez, Mississippi, farther up the Mississippi River. In Natchez, Stanton became a cotton factor and later a prominent planter. By the 1850s, he had accumulated over 15,000 acres in six Louisiana and Mississippi plantations.²⁷ He originally lived at "Cherokee," a fine house on the corner of High and Wall Streets. In the early 1850s, however, on an entire city block between Monroe and High Streets, he commenced building the famous "Stanton

Hall,” which he originally called “Belfast.” Fearing he might die before its completion, he put a codicil in his will stating that the house should “be finished in the style now progressing and handsomely furnished in the latest and most fashionable style or manner.”²⁸ By 1860, Frederick’s brother David was also prospering, owning \$122,000 worth of property in Adams County alone and living in a mansion called “The Elms.”²⁹

James McCann of South Carolina also tried to strike it rich growing cotton. After spending four months in Charleston, he set out for the upcountry to buy land near “New bery,” South Carolina, in February 1821. He felt confident that he would “do well” in this “country” and contemplated sending for his father at home in Ireland.³⁰ By July he seemed to be having second thoughts and asked his brother about opportunities in New York. He did not leave and instead began to raise cotton.

Unlike the Stantons, McCann found the cotton business difficult. In 1828 he discovered himself in dire straits because of low crop yields and “lost time” from illness, and he had to ask his brother for a loan.³¹ By the 1840s, like many other cotton farmers from the Palmetto State, he decided to move to Mississippi. Here in the fertile black belt land of Lowndes County in the northeastern part of the state, he operated a 200-acre farm. In 1844 he produced fifteen bales of cotton and also grew corn, wheat, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, pumpkins, and “water mil-lins.” He built his own cotton gin the following year. Despite his improving situation, he still had cash-flow problems because cotton prices remained low, but his faith in the white fiber did not diminish. He wrote, “cotton is the only thing that will bring us any money.”³²

Patrick Riley also found the land better in Mississippi than in the rest of the South. “An Irishman by birth,” in 1835 he and his Choctaw wife lived in the Yazoo River valley on land that Mississippi’s “civilized” Indian tribes had recently vacated. Surrounded by his family, he farmed “two sections of splendid land with [a] creek running through it affording plenty of water.”³³ Apparently some Irish did strike out by themselves in search of success.

Rather than heading out alone as did James McCann and Pat Riley, most prefamine Irish migrants in the backcountry banded together to exploit the South’s fertile land. In rural Georgia, a group of families formed the nucleus of an Irish settlement. In 1793, a descendant of English Catholics, Thomas H. Luckett, moved from Maryland to Georgia. Eventually he settled at Locust Grove, in what became Taliaferro County, and helped found the Church of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This Catholic enclave in middle Georgia attracted Irish migrants from the rest of the state and also from South Carolina, people

like Thomas Mulledy, John Burke, Michael Ryan, and Mortimer “Murtha” Griffin. Griffin was a native of County Carlow and first appears in Locust Grove records in 1826. By 1833 he had purchased, for \$1,810, over 1,000 acres of land with access to a river. Here Griffin grew cotton and increased his holdings to 2,100 acres in Taliaferro County, 400 acres in lower Georgia, and 380 acres in Mississippi by 1860.³⁴ A Scots Irish cotton factor from nearby Augusta, H. C. Bryson, described the Irish settlers at Locust Grove as “hard-working, sober people, who would not hang about the cities.” They were in “comfortable circumstances” and never sick. Bryson believed that “they [were] a credit to any country.”³⁵

Griffin’s land in Mississippi was in the central part of the state in Madison County. In 1841, Sylvester Luckett, the son of the Locust Grove founder, went to Mississippi in search of virgin land for continued cotton growth. At Sulphur Springs, he founded “Locust Grove II,” and many of the Irish families back in Georgia followed him there. Sulphur Springs became another thriving Irish community with the Ryans, O’Learys, Wards, and O’Reillys, among others, making a living from “King Cotton.”³⁶

The lure of land in the Old Southwest drew other Irish migrants to that region. Initially settled in 1812, the town of Paulding, in Jasper County, Mississippi, became a relay station on the stagecoach line between New Orleans and Nashville. This “Queen City of the East,” as locals called it, soon attracted Irish settlers. In the 1830s, Paulding’s Irish citizens congregated in the Rose Hill section, which became known as “Irish-town.” Men such as Patrick Carr, Cornelius O’Flinn, and Patrick Malone brought their young families to farm the soil of Jasper County.³⁷

Even farther west in Texas, available land was also a strong lure for the Irish. A Mexican province, Texas became an independent republic in 1836 and part of the United States in 1845. Cullen Thomas Conley, a sixteen-year-old runaway, jumped ship and swam to shore at Savannah, Georgia, in 1836. He traveled north to Houston County, Georgia, but headed for Texas in 1844. Conley made it only as far as Bienville Parish in north Louisiana. He and his wife formed their own Irish settlement by having ten children, and he supported this family by speculating in land and growing cotton.³⁸

Not all of those bound for Texas stopped short of their destination. Robert Henry and his wife, Elizabeth, left the north of Ireland in 1820 for Charleston. After several years of growing cotton in South Carolina and Alabama, they settled in what later became Brazos County, Texas, arriving there in 1829 and homesteading a land grant from the Mexican government. In late 1833, after Scots Irish settlers from Alabama joined the Henrys in Texas, they founded their “little Ulster” at Staggers Point.

Having reenacted the experience of their eighteenth-century Scots Irish predecessors, they remained loyal to their Presbyterian faith and prospered in their new homes.³⁹

The Irish in Staggers Point were not, however, the first Irish in Texas. In 1826, Irish *empresarios* (businessmen) James Power and James Heweston applied to the Mexican state of Coahuila for a land grant between Galveston Bay and the Sabine River in east Texas. Since Coahuila had already allotted Power's and Heweston's first choice to another *empresario*, it granted them a parcel in south Texas near Copano Bay on the Gulf of Mexico. The proprietors called it Refugio after an old Spanish mission in the area. Two years later, John McMullen and James McGloin received San Patricio, a grant west of Refugio in the Nueces River region. Both colonies attracted Catholic Irish settlers from the United States. On one occasion, James Power went home to Ireland in 1833 and returned with 350 immigrants from his native County Wexford. These Irish communities were something of a buffer between Mexican authorities and the American settlers in east Texas, and they played an important role in bringing Texas closer to the United States and the South.⁴⁰

These settlements from Georgia to Texas demonstrate that not all Irish migrants to the South stayed in towns and cities. Rural dwellers, however, were still the exception rather than the rule for prefamine immigrants in the South. Like Eugene Magevney and Frederick Stanton, most of the early Irish chose to find their opportunities in the growing towns of the region. For example, Robert Givin wrote home to County Antrim from the shores of the Tombigbee River just north of Mobile, Alabama, in 1821, complaining that "this country is dull" and advising "let the people stay at home [in Ireland]." He found that he could make money as a carpenter in Alabama, but not "a large fortune." One year later, however, he was more optimistic, despite not having made a large fortune. Givin had arrived in New Orleans and believed that "in this country, a man can make money."⁴¹ He, it seems, found no inspiration in the example of the eighteenth-century backcountry pioneers from Ulster.

Other young Irish men like Givin also sought economic opportunities in southern cities and towns. John McFarland came to Manchester (later Yazoo City), Mississippi, in 1839 as a "penniless youth," but he soon prospered as a cotton factor there and later in New Orleans.⁴² Daniel Butler left Ireland in 1844 for Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he worked in a dry goods and grocery business. Within a few months, he had plans "to establish credit" for himself and open his own business in the busy cotton district of western Alabama.⁴³ John McLaughlin came to Savannah, Georgia, in 1840 to work in a local bank. Farther up the Savannah River, fellow Irishman John Moore was president of the Bank of Augusta. Moore also

had interests in merchant houses that imported goods from England to the North for sale to merchants in the surrounding countryside.⁴⁴

Whether wealthy, like Moore, or just starting out, like Butler and McLaughlin, the Irish favored urban areas for more than just career advancement. The social life of the town attracted them, and perhaps the Irish migrants, like James Black of Charleston, South Carolina, had unpleasant memories of the “love of the land” back home. On 27 November 1837, Black wrote in his diary that he dreamed about the farm of his youth in Ireland, but the dream quickly became a nightmare when the earth started to “devour” him.⁴⁵ Alice Sharkey similarly articulated the ambivalence that she and other Irish immigrants shared regarding rural life. In a letter to her sister-in-law, she wrote that she admired the prosperity of rural St. Helena Parish, Louisiana, which was “a great place for anyone who bought a farm,” but she also noted that the remote area was “very lonesome.”⁴⁶ Undoubtedly, similar sentiments influenced the numerous other Irish who flocked to the towns and cities.

The other major Irish presence in the countryside was constituted by the gangs of Irish laborers who toiled on the South’s public works. Surrounded by their comrades, they probably avoided loneliness as they dug canals and laid railroad tracks through the rural South. They, too, however, eventually gravitated toward towns and cities. Nashville’s first sizable Irish influx occurred in 1819 when a group of workers came to build the stone bridge across the Cumberland River. Others settled there after working on the railroads. Irish workers on the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad in rural Georgia founded their own small town. Canal construction brought Irish workers to Columbia, South Carolina, in 1821 and to Brunswick, Georgia, in 1838.⁴⁷ Both Savannah and Charleston’s largest prefamine Irish influxes came to work on the railroads. The city of Augusta lured Irish workers away from the Central Georgia Railroad to work on its canal project.⁴⁸

The largest group of prefamine workers, however, settled in New Orleans, the third-largest city in the country in 1840. New Orleans became a “labor depot” for Irish workers in the 1830s and 1840s.⁴⁹ Because some of its civic leaders in the newer “uptown” sections of the city wanted a more direct link between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, in 1830 they gained a state charter to construct the New Basin Canal. The canal company hired thousands of Irish laborers, including 136 recruited directly from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the dangerous digging task. After they had completed work on the canal in 1836, most stayed in New Orleans to work on other projects, including everything from digging ditches in the surrounding “sugar parishes” to working in the drayage business.⁵⁰ Some found employment carrying goods from

the wharves of New Orleans to the city's warehouses. This type of work provided less perilous employment than digging canals. Others took more dangerous, but also more lucrative, positions at the docks, working as stevedores or screwmen.⁵¹

Since the decline of Charleston after the War of Independence and the explosion of cotton in the mid-South, New Orleans had become the only serious southern challenger to New York City's dominance of foreign trade. From a low point in 1844, the price of cotton recovered throughout the rest of the 1840s and into the 1850s, and the city boomed. The southern economy as a whole enjoyed a renaissance during this period that even the downturn of 1857 could not halt. Southerners faced the 1860s with a renewed belief in cotton and slavery.⁵²

Thus, the new Irish migrants of the 1840s and 1850s, like their forebears, entered the South during a period of optimistic growth, but the opportunities this time were overwhelmingly in urban areas. Still, settlements such as Sulphur Springs and Paulding attracted new Irish migrants. For example, Peter Harkins and his family left County Longford in 1851, landed in New Orleans, and set out for Mississippi to purchase land near Sulphur Springs.⁵³ A few Irish people even lived in the more isolated parts of the South. Tim Sheen, a thirty-eight-year-old laborer, was the only Irishman on a large plantation belonging to one S. Williams in Issaquena County, Mississippi. Not only was Sheen the only Irishman on the plantation, but he was also the only Irishman in that sparsely populated delta county.⁵⁴

In general, however, the new migrants avoided the underdeveloped, isolated sections of the South. The counties with the lowest Irish-born populations were usually in the pine barrens, mountains, or swamps of the region. For example, Greene and Jones Counties, in the pine barrens of Mississippi, had no Irish residents in 1860. The mountainous counties of Arkansas, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee and the hill counties of north Alabama had little or no immigrant Irish presence. The still-undeveloped Mississippi and Arkansas delta counties and most of Florida also had few, if any, antebellum Irish residents.⁵⁵

The only rural counties with a significant Irish population between 1845 and 1860 were the ones through which railroads passed or were areas that needed a number of Irish ditch diggers and levee builders. Many sections of the South chartered their own internal improvements in the 1850s, and these attracted Irish workers from the towns. In the 1850s, the South built railroads at a more rapid rate than did the North.⁵⁶ At the beginning of this decade, a large gang of Irish New Orleanians worked through the southern Louisiana swamps laying the tracks for the Opelousas Railroad.⁵⁷ By 1852, the Mobile and Ohio Railroad had

TABLE 3. Irish Population of Selected Southern Cities in 1850 and 1860

| | Irish Population in 1850 | Irish Population in 1860 | % Change |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Charleston, S.C. | 2,359 | 3,263 | +38.3 |
| Memphis, Tenn. | 704 | 4,159 | +490.8 |
| Mobile, Ala. | 2,009 | 3,307 | +64.6 |
| New Orleans, La.* | 20,200 | 24,398 | +20.8 |
| Richmond, Va. | 685 | 2,294 | +234.9 |
| Savannah, Ga. | 1,555 | 3,145 | +102.3 |

Sources: De Bow, ed., *Statistical View of the United States: A Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 397–99; Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxi–xxxii.

*The figures for New Orleans in 1850 include the cities of Lafayette and Algiers (Lafayette became part of New Orleans in 1852), but Algiers was not included in the figure for 1860. Bureau of Government Research, *Wards of New Orleans* (New Orleans: Bureau of Government Research, 1961), 15–16.

entered eastern Mississippi at Clarke and Lauderdale Counties en route to its final destination at the Ohio River. These two counties in 1860 had a large number of Irish railhands who usually lived together, reflecting the gang nature of their work. John Conroy and Tom Ryan lived with six other Irish men at Lauderdale Springs, Mississippi, and this self-sufficient group included two butchers and a cook.⁵⁸ Farther west, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad brought Irish men out of Galveston into the Texas countryside in the 1850s.⁵⁹ The state of Mississippi employed large numbers of levee builders in the 1850s to implement flood control. These workers helped construct 310 miles of levees and had another 100 miles under construction by the onset of the Civil War.⁶⁰

Despite the presence of Irish men working in the rural counties of the South, census figures clearly show that the majority of famine-era immigrants followed their predecessors into urban areas (see Tables 3 and 4). Concentrating in towns made them a much more visible presence. New Orleans had a large Irish population, but other cities had sizable Irish percentages even when absolute Irish numbers were low. In particular, Memphis and Savannah had notable Irish minorities.

Census figures also highlight the overall urban nature of the Irish presence in the South. In 1860, over 86 percent of Louisiana's Irish lived in New Orleans, while 65 and 58 percent of South Carolina's and Alabama's Irish lived in Charleston and Mobile, respectively. Although a majority of Georgia's, Tennessee's, and Virginia's Irish did not live in Savannah, Memphis, or Richmond, the rest of those states' Irish lived in

TABLE 4. Irish Population of Selected Southern Cities as a Percentage of the Total and White Populations in 1850 and 1860

| | 1850 | | 1860 | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Irish % of Total Population | Irish % of White Population | Irish % of Total Population | Irish % of White Population |
| Charleston, S.C. | 5.5 | 11.8 | 8.0 | 14.0 |
| Memphis, Tenn. | 8.0 | 11.1 | 18.4 | 22.2 |
| Mobile, Ala. | 9.8 | 15.5 | 11.3 | 15.9 |
| New Orleans, La.* | 15.1 | 19.5 | 15.5 | 16.9 |
| Richmond, Va. | 2.5 | 4.5 | 5.9 | 9.5 |
| Savannah, Ga. | 10.2 | 18.5 | 14.1 | 22.7 |

Sources: De Bow, ed., *Statistical View of the United States: A Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 397–99; Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxxi–xxxii.

*The figures for New Orleans in 1850 include the cities of Lafayette and Algiers.

other urban areas. In Georgia, both Richmond and Fulton Counties, which contained the cities of Augusta and Atlanta, had sizable Irish populations.⁶¹ After Shelby County, Tennessee (Memphis), the largest Irish numbers in the Volunteer State were in Davidson and Knox Counties, home to Nashville and Knoxville. In Virginia, Alexandria, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Petersburg, Portsmouth, and Wheeling all had significant Irish populations. Most of North Carolina's Irish lived in Wilmington.⁶²

In the more rural states of the South, the Irish also congregated in towns. For example, most of Mississippi's Irish lived in Natchez, Vicksburg, Port Gibson, Jackson, and the growing communities on the Gulf Coast; Arkansas's Irish lived in Little Rock, Fort Smith, and Helena. In Texas, by 1860, more Irish natives lived in Houston and Galveston than in Refugio and San Patricio. The Irish in Florida mostly lived in what passed for towns in that sparsely populated state — Key West and Pensacola.⁶³

The Irish experience in the Old South, therefore, was primarily urban. A native resident or a visitor to the Old South might have bumped into a significant Irish presence in certain rural locations; but he or she would more likely have been familiar with the Irish urban pioneer. Noted nineteenth-century traveler Frederick Law Olmsted met Irish immigrants in many parts of the South, but he noticed them especially in the crowded streets of southern towns. Shocked by their coarse habits, he also observed the rough nature of their work. In New Orleans, he met an Irish policeman and an Irish cab driver, and he heard about Irish men laboring for black tradesmen.⁶⁴ Another visitor to the same city noticed that the

“third section,” farther down the Mississippi River, was “given over to the tender mercies of the Dutch and the Irish, and usual accompaniments of flaxen-poll’d babies and flaxen-tailed pigs.”⁶⁵ The Irish, it seemed, were only fit to do work, as a Louisiana overseer put it, that was “death on niggers and mules.”⁶⁶ An observer of the Irish digging the New Basin Canal discovered that an Irish life was a cheap one, because “a good slave costs at this time two hundred pounds sterling, and to have a thousand such swept off a line of canal in one season would call for prompt consideration.”⁶⁷

While these observations indicate the significant presence of the Irish in the South, they disguise the real impact of the Irish. Olmsted and others suggest that, upon arrival, the destitute Irish fell to the lowest rung of the section’s social ladder and lived in “cultural isolation.”⁶⁸ This implication that the Irish were passive and lacked control over their lives is incorrect. Unlike slaves, the Irish chose to live in the urban South. Those migrants who made this conscious and rational decision helped the South maintain urban growth rates between 1840 and 1860 that ranged from the impressive 44.6 percent growth of South Carolina towns to the massive 571.7 percent expansion of Tennessee’s urban dwellers.⁶⁹

The Irish, moreover, were not victims of this urbanization. Their role as urban pioneers of the Old South went beyond mere numbers. They formed communities, social organizations, and churches. They kept a keen interest in the affairs of Ireland and their relatives there, while at the same time taking an active role in the politics of their new homes. But they primarily came to the towns and cities for economic opportunity. Most of them “wanted nothing to do with the uncertainties of farming.”⁷⁰ The complex social networks created in the South by the Irish diaspora would not have existed if the immigrants had only dug ditches, laid railroads, and loaded steamboats and ships. The Irish eventually moved from the status of pioneer to that of citizen. The roots they planted in the towns and cities provided the foundation for that transition.

CHAPTER THREE

EARNING A LIVING

Irish immigrants came to the South primarily for economic opportunity, and their occupational status was much more varied than travelers' observations imply. Some Irish southerners became very wealthy and were leaders in the economic development of southern towns. There was, however, some truth in the stereotype of the Irishman's doing only the work too dangerous for slaves. Large numbers of Irish people worked in menial, unskilled, and often dangerous occupations, where they suffered poverty and destitution. The antebellum southern economy was riddled with inequalities, and the Irish fell disproportionately into the lower end of the economic scale.¹ Nevertheless, the dynamic southern economy did not condemn them to seclusion, depression, and cultural disintegration. On the contrary, they found and exploited any economic opportunities open to them in southern towns. From the richest to the poorest they sought to better their own lives and managed to make important contributions to the economy of their new home. Through these efforts at self-improvement, they gained enough economic standing to take a fuller role in southern society.

The occupational status of Irish men in selected southern cities highlights the various roles they played in the urban workforce.² In 1850, the largest group of Irish men worked in menial, unskilled occupations (see Table 5).³ Compared with workers in the South as a whole, they were overrepresented in the unskilled category.⁴ The figures, however, also show that the Irish were well represented in other categories. Richmond, in particular, had a larger number of skilled Irish men. Most of them were machinists and blacksmiths working in that city's burgeoning industries. Artisans in other cities were usually carpenters, tailors, or stonecutters. Many of the Mobile Irish were bakers and confectioners, whereas carpenters and plasterers made up the significant portion of the Irish artisans in Natchez.⁵

Because of their importance as port cities, New Orleans and Mobile had greater percentages of Irish men in semiskilled positions. These

TABLE 5. Occupational Status of Irish Men Aged 15 and Over in Selected Southern Cities, 1850

| | % Un- skilled | % Semi- skilled | % Skilled | % Low- White- Collar | % High- White- Collar | % Planter/ Farmer | % None Listed | Total Cases |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Mobile, Ala. | 43.6 | 16.6 | 23.7 | 12.1 | 3.1 | .3 | .5 | 939 |
| Natchez, Miss. | 18.1 | 4.3 | 36.2 | 20.2 | 12.8 | 1.1 | 7.4 | 94 |
| New Orleans, La. | 51.3 | 17.1 | 17.1 | 10.1 | 1.7 | 0 | 2.7 | 626* |
| Richmond, Va. | 43.2 | 5.2 | 26.4 | 12.1 | 8.5 | 0 | 4.7 | 387 |

Source: *Seventh Census, 1850* (Mobile County, Ala.), (Adams County, Miss.), (City of New Orleans), (Jefferson Parish, La.), (Henrico County, Va.). "Unskilled" refers mostly to laborers. "Semiskilled" includes stevedores, policemen, and waiters; "skilled" includes artisans such as carpenters, machinists, and plasterers. Most white-collar Irish, low or high, worked in merchandising. High-white-collar businessmen owned property worth more than \$1,000. Professionals are also classified as high-white-collar.

Note: For specific job titles belonging to each status category, see the Appendix.

*Sample representing every tenth case in the cities of New Orleans and Lafayette.

cities' economic activities centered around trade. Lifting goods on and off ships and transporting them to and from the interior required large numbers of semiskilled workers. Thus, numerous Irish mariners and steamboat men lived in both cities. In the New Orleans sample, Irish draymen and stevedores were also very common.⁶

Only a minority of Irish men worked in white-collar occupations, and those were usually petty proprietors or clerks. Some Irish merchants, however, prospered. Men such as John McGonagle of Mobile, Timothy Burns of Richmond, and Thomas Reddy of Natchez operated sizable establishments. Most Irish professionals in the high-white-collar category were druggists, with the occasional physician, lawyer, or civil engineer.

In 1860, the Irish occupational status of these cities showed some change (see Table 6). The influx of new immigrants from Ireland, as well as from other parts of the United States, increased the Irish populations in each city. Again, the largest occupational group was unskilled. In every city, with the exception of New Orleans, the proportion of unskilled Irish workers increased. The relatively small increase in New Orleans's total Irish population between 1850 and 1860, as well as the large percentage of unrecorded Irish occupations, could account for this decrease. The semiskilled and skilled categories for New Orleans show only slight increases; therefore, they cannot account for all the drop in the unskilled

TABLE 6. Occupational Status of Irish Men Aged 15 and Over in Selected Southern Cities, 1860

| | % Un- skilled | % Semi- skilled | % Skilled | % Low- White- Collar | % High- White- Collar | % Planter/ Farmer | % None Listed | Total Cases |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Mobile, Ala. | 45.8 | 13.7 | 21.6 | 8.4 | 5.9 | .1 | 4.6 | 1,530 |
| Natchez, Miss. | 45.8 | 6.6 | 30.7 | 5.0 | 8.2 | 0 | 8.8 | 319 |
| New Orleans, La. | 41.7 | 17.5 | 17.8 | 9.6 | 5.2 | 0 | 8.4 | 1,013* |
| Richmond, Va. | 44.8 | 9.1 | 22.9 | 9.7 | 5.7 | 0 | 8.1 | 1,150 |

Source: Eighth Census, 1860, vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.), vol. 1 (Adams County, Miss.), vols. 5, 6, 7, 8 (Orleans Parish, La.), vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.).

Note: For specific job titles belonging to each status category, see the Appendix.

*Sample representing every tenth case in New Orleans.

percentage. It is very unlikely that the increase in the high-white-collar group was caused by large numbers of laborers becoming established merchants or physicians over a ten-year period.

The most dramatic change occurred in Natchez. In 1850, this town had a small, fairly settled prefamine Irish community. By 1860, however, the tidal wave of immigrants that hit the United States finally reached Natchez. Although examining the birthplace of children is not a perfect method of tracking internal migration, in Natchez it demonstrates that most Irish workers had spent time in another region of the United States before coming to this Mississippi River town. The increases in Irish laborers in Mobile and Richmond seem to correlate with a decline in the semiskilled and skilled categories and give the impression that the Irish position in the southern economy deteriorated over the decade.

The previous tables hide, however, the reality that in total numbers the Irish increased their presence in the higher occupations (see Table 7). While not a perfect measure of occupational mobility, these figures do show some upward mobility among the Irish.

Thus, along with the influx of a new pool of unskilled Irish labor into the South in the 1850s came more skilled and entrepreneurial workers also. This higher representation among the better occupations may also reflect an improvement in status for the pre-1850 migrants. The new arrivals apparently did not handicap the status of men like John J. Moore, a wholesaler in uptown New Orleans with \$47,000 worth of real estate, or John Dooley, a hatter and merchant from Richmond, Virginia, whose real estate holdings, according to the census, increased in value from \$4,000

TABLE 7. Numbers of Irish Men Aged 15 and Over Employed in Skilled and White-Collar Occupations, 1860

| | | % Change since 1850 | Low- White- Collar | % Change since 1850 | High- White- Collar | % Change since 1850 |
|-------------------|---------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Skilled | | | | | |
| Mobile, Ala. | 333 | +48.0 | 128 | +12.3 | 80 | +175.9 |
| Natchez, Miss. | 98 | +188.2 | 16 | -15.8 | 26 | +116.6 |
| New Orleans, La.* | 180 | +68.2 | 97 | +54.0 | 52 | +372.7 |
| Richmond, Va. | 263 | +157.8 | 112 | +138.3 | 65 | +97.0 |

Sources: *Seventh Census, 1850*, (Mobile County, Ala.), (Adams County, Miss.), (City of New Orleans), (Jefferson Parish, La.), (Henrico County, Va.); *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.), vol. 1 (Adams County, Miss.), vols. 5, 6, 7, 8 (Orleans Parish, La.), vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.).

Note: For specific job titles belonging to the skilled and white-collar status category, see the Appendix.

*Samples representing every tenth case in the cities of New Orleans and Lafayette in 1850 and every tenth case in New Orleans in 1860.

to \$14,000 between 1850 and 1860.⁷ Moore and the rest of the Irish merchant elite led very comfortable lives in southern cities and towns. For example, William Porterfield of Vicksburg, Mississippi, sold tickets for his own and other steam packets on the Mississippi River. The 1860 census estimated his personal estate at a very low \$5,000, but a description of "Shamrock," his three-story city mansion built in 1865, reflects his true wealth. The first floor alone cost \$50,000 to construct. Each room contained a marble mantelpiece imported from Italy at the cost of \$1,000 each. Mrs. Porterfield filled the house with Queen Anne furnishings, silver-plated doorknobs, and solid walnut stair steps; she also imported exotic flora for the grounds. This palatial dwelling proved fit enough for Mississippi politician and future Confederate president Jefferson Davis, who stayed at Shamrock each time he visited Vicksburg.⁸

Irish men prospered not only in sales, but in other southern business ventures as well. James Roach operated a bank and sat on the board of the very successful Vicksburg and Jackson Railroad. Roach also was instrumental in the organization of one of Mississippi's first true industries, the Paxton Foundry and Machine Shop.⁹ John Moore of Augusta, Georgia, was also involved in finance; he served as president of the Bank of Augusta, "the oldest institution in the state, and one having the largest capital." Banking, however, became more difficult for Moore, "owing to the derangement in the currency the last two years." Fortunately, he had

another interest in a wholesale business, which bought goods from England and the northern states to sell “to country merchants.”¹⁰

The railroad industry provided many opportunities for white-collar advancement. Irish-born Walter Goodman presided over the Mississippi Central Railroad, which linked the Magnolia State with railroads extending to Nashville, Tennessee, and Cincinnati, Ohio.¹¹ In Richmond, Alex Worrell was superintendent of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, while James Elder prospered in Mobile in the same position for the Mobile and Ohio Railroad.¹²

While not nearly as common as merchants and business managers, some Irish white-collar workers practiced professions. Hugh Lyle offered his medical services to the citizens of Natchez. Robert Langfield and Patrick Wallace taught at a private academy in Mobile.¹³ James Kernan taught, among others, the young William C. Falkner of Ripley, Mississippi, the grandfather of the famous twentieth-century author. J. M. T. Brown operated a strict school for boys in the Mississippi capital. Samuel Nelson, a new resident of Natchez, gave public lectures on “the advantages to be derived from studying the Latin and Greek languages minutely.” Nelson hoped to drum up enough interest to get at least sixteen pupils for his own school. Samuel O’Callaghan was a successful lawyer in New Orleans.¹⁴

Teaching also provided opportunities for Irish women. Apart from the various Catholic female religious orders, Irish women teachers did not usually run their own schools. In most cases, these women lived and worked in the plantation residence while tutoring the children. In 1845, after terminating her employment with a nearby school in Tuscumbia, Alabama, Nancy Wightman taught on the plantation of a Mr. and Mrs. Collins near Florence, Alabama. There she moved to the country and taught four Collins daughters and three other girls from a neighboring family who were “not so smart, but very good children.” Finding teaching fulfilling, she was “as much engaged in [the students’] welfare as if they had been in my Sunday school class.”¹⁵

Like Wightman, other Irish southerners found opportunity on the plantation. A few Irish men, most of whom were pre-famine migrants and Protestant, reached beyond sales jobs and professional posts to attain the heights of the fictional Gerald O’Hara in Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind*. Becoming a planter meant reaching the summit of the southern social scale, because “the plantation type of life set the tone of southern society.”¹⁶ Frederick Stanton realized this fact soon after he arrived in Natchez in 1818. A trained physician, he gave up his practice and became a cotton farmer and ultimately a planter with six plantations. The Catholic Michael O’Reilly of Madison County, Mississippi, also turned his

back on medicine in order to purchase a modest plantation and twenty-six slaves.¹⁷ In Louisiana, Maunsel White ran a profitable sugar brokerage and owned a large sugar plantation with hundreds of slaves in Plaquemines Parish.¹⁸ Alexander Porter owned a large plantation in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana. His estate, located on "Irish Bend" and known as "Oak Lawn," had "nearly 2,000 acres into cultivation, and [had] a stock of about 160 Negroes, 40 horses, and a variety of other cattle."¹⁹ As a proper southern "aristocrat," he took a keen interest in horse racing and occasionally imported thoroughbreds from Europe for his stables. Porter also built a handsome mansion and became renowned for his hospitality. His visitors included the famous Whig politician Henry Clay. One of Porter's guests stated that anyone fortunate enough to stay at Oak Lawn would "remember the warm Irish welcome and luxurious hospitality of its accomplished master."²⁰

Porter, however, did not spend much time managing his plantation. He, like most rich planters, left the day-to-day administration of crops and slaves to overseers. Young single men dominated overseeing and, naturally, some Irish men like Charles Burns and Dennis Sullivan of Lowndes County, Mississippi, took the opportunities offered there. Overseers as a whole tended to be underpaid. Some, however, could earn up to \$1,200 a year. Nevertheless, the average salary for the post was between \$500 and \$600 annually. Overseers on the rice plantations and sugar plantations of South Carolina and Louisiana, respectively, were paid higher salaries.²¹ Natives dominated in these more established plantation regions, but occasionally an Irish overseer did well in the newer plantation areas. For example, John Reynolds, the overseer on Mary Stower's Warren County, Mississippi, plantation, owned ten slaves. This all-male group of slaves ranged from eighteen to thirty-five years of age and probably aided Reynolds in controlling his employer's plantation.²²

Despite these examples of prosperity in rural areas, the Irish, particularly the famine Irish, found more chances for success in urban areas. Self-employed Irish men and women huckstered and peddled their wares, everything from fruit to rags, to the South's urban dwellers. They operated taverns, coffeehouses, and boardinghouses. Mary Murphy, aged twenty-eight, managed a "coffeehouse and dancing room" in the New Orleans French Quarter and "employed" Irish prostitutes Mary Gallagher, Mary Meagher, and Abby Phillips.²³ One Mrs. O'Connell of Mobile tendered tamer services to the local populace. Her new store on Dauphin Street offered "bonnets, ribbons, flowers, ostrich feathers, embroideries, French corsets, fancy goods." Mrs. O'Connell advised that "ladies, planters, and commission merchants [would] find it to their advantage to call and examine her stock of millinery before purchasing elsewhere." Mar-

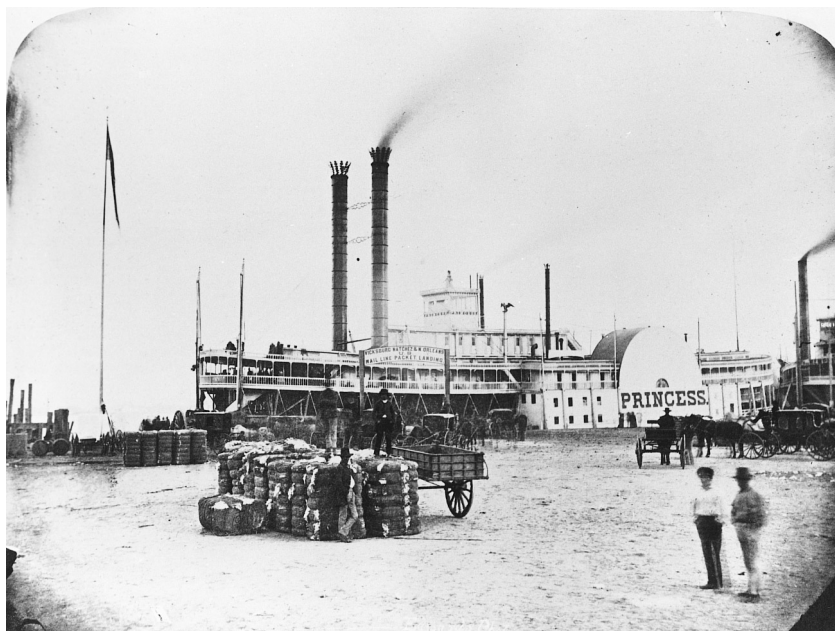
garet Haughey of New Orleans operated a very successful dairy and bakery business and became one the city's greatest philanthropists.²⁴

Unlike Mrs. O'Connell, a large section of the Irish in the low-white-collar category did not operate their own businesses but instead clerked for others. Clerking did offer opportunities for advancement. Recent arrival Daniel Butler worked for Irish merchant John O'Brien in North Port, Alabama. Butler noticed that O'Brien was an "industrious man," but could "not get the hang of the Americas and without it he can't well get along here." Apparently, the young clerk felt confident that he himself could receive credit in Mobile to open his own store. Taking account of "clerk hire, store rent, and negro hire," Butler believed that he could still earn a handsome profit and find, as he wrote, an "opportunity of improving myself in many things I find myself deficient in."²⁵

Irish artisans in the South also sought to improve themselves. Shoemaker James Hughes of Natchez owned \$9,000 worth of real estate, while carpenter James Keating of Lafayette, near New Orleans, held \$10,000 worth. Michael Burns, a saddler from County Sligo, was one of Nashville's richest artisans with properties worth \$100,000.²⁶ After landing in New Orleans, Patrick Murphy brought his skills to Natchez and later to Rodney, Mississippi. The young Irishman earned a lucrative income working for local planters. Murphy eventually became a bridge builder for private individuals and public authorities and made enough money to purchase property and several slaves.²⁷

City and state governments throughout the South tapped the Irish labor pool for public work. In Mobile and New Orleans, Irish pavers and laborers cleaned and mended streets.²⁸ They also worked in the South's nascent law enforcement agencies. Irish guards from Richmond to New Orleans protected the local citizenry. In Charleston and New Orleans in particular, they dominated the antebellum police forces. As soon as they arrived in the Crescent City, Irish men joined the city guard in each municipality, and when the city consolidated in 1852, the Irish became the dominant nationality on the unified force. Providing decent pay and job security, the police force required few skills and little education; thus, the Irish served generously in every precinct in the city. Recognizing the importance of the Irish presence on the force and in New Orleans as a whole, the mayor appointed Irish-born Stephen O'Leary police chief in 1853.²⁹ Four years after Charleston reorganized its police force in 1856, Irish men made up 58 percent of the force. They patrolled the city through all sorts of disorder and turbulence.³⁰

A policeman earned more than a laborer, but his work was not as profitable as other semiskilled work. "King Cotton's" rebirth in the 1850s increased business in the southern ports of Savannah, Mobile, and New



Levee workers and draymen, New Orleans, 1850s (The Historic New Orleans Collection, accession no. 1982.32.1)

Orleans. Loading and unloading goods provided numerous opportunities for Irish men. Irish stevedores and warehousemen dominated the wharves of southern ports. Irish hands, mates, and firemen were conspicuous on the steamboats bringing goods to and from the interior. Irish men also moved into the more skilled process of “cotton screwing.” This dangerous task required the screwmen to use large “jackscrews” to compress cotton bales as small as possible to fit into the holds of ships. Working in cramped conditions, the screwmen had little room for error with the heavy bales. Better paid than their fellow dockworkers, the screwmen had a very dangerous task.³¹

Less dangerous, but occasionally as well paid, the drayage business attracted Irish men. Irish drivers hauling goods from the docks to businesses and warehouses throughout southern cities were a common sight. Some Irish, like “Boss Drayman” Thomas Dunne of New Orleans, earned thousands of dollars. Employee draymen did not accumulate as much as Dunne, but they were consistently more prosperous than other semi- and unskilled workers.³²

Irish waiters and chambermaids rarely owned property of any sort. Tied to their workplaces, they could not exploit the opportunities at the river’s edge. Waiting tables, cleaning rooms, and laundering linens were,

however, safer and less backbreaking than working on the docks. Hundreds of Irish men and women worked in prestigious establishments like the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans. When business slackened at these hostelrys during the summer months, many Irish followed the rich folk to the Mississippi Gulf Coast to wait on and clean for them there.³³

In the semiskilled sector, Irish women usually worked as domestics and servants. Many rich southern urban dwellers relied on Irish women to fill domestic positions in their homes. Along with a few rich Irish merchants, Irish servant girls made up the significant portion of the Irish population in more affluent neighborhoods. Unlike native-born Americans, these young women did not see “domestic work” as demeaning.³⁴

Irish seamstresses in southern cities rarely owned any kind of property. In the mid-nineteenth century, needlework offered low pay, poor working conditions, and notoriously unstable job security. Occasionally, an Irish woman in the South, like Sarah Black of New Orleans, could accumulate some personal property as a “dressmaker” and employ a team of seamstresses to do the tedious stitch work.³⁵

Despite an Irish presence in every sector of the urban workforce, monotonous physical labor was the norm for the largest group of Irish workers. Their employment stability was the most precarious and their working conditions the most harsh among free people laboring in the South. Usually living in overcrowded boardinghouses or “dingy, squalid, cheerless, Negro huts,” any respite away from their places of residence did not necessarily mean better circumstances.³⁶ One group of Irish men who built a levee for a Louisiana planter lived in a hastily constructed “shanty.” After two weeks of digging, they had made significant progress but were “pestered a good deal with chills and fever.” Their unnamed “slight” fever became debilitating eight days later, when they became extremely ill with yellow fever.³⁷ It is not known what became of these Irish laborers, but it is probable that a number of them died.

Premature mortality afflicted Old South inhabitants in general. The Irish, however, were more susceptible to the subtropical diseases rampant in the sweltering and damp climate — particularly yellow fever. The southern heat and humidity were new to the Irish immigrant. James Black of Charleston complained of the “uncomfortable heat.” Political refugee Richard D’Alton Williams complained in Alabama that he would be gradually “reduced to a liquid form, and stored away in a bottle to await resolidification in winter.” Irish nuns who arrived in New Orleans during midsummer quickly modified their Irish habits that were designed for the cooler climate back home. They “switch[ed] from heavy wool serge inner sleeves to cotton ones in their dress.”³⁸ Nancy Wightman griped

that she could not live in Alabama “with any comfort without night air.” Sometimes, though, she awoke “feverish . . . with violent headaches.”³⁹

Fortunately for Wightman, she did not live in the crowded towns and cities where disease, especially yellow fever, took a huge toll. One antebellum observer wrote that in Georgia, only Savannah drew “so tragic a picture of his ravages [yellow fever] in such strong colors.”⁴⁰ “Yellow Jack” also hit New Orleans, “almost every summer for over one hundred years.” Cholera, too, was no stranger to the southern “disease environment.”⁴¹ The region’s susceptibility to disease increased when the Irish arrived. They put pressure on southern cities’ already fragile water and sewage systems.⁴² The Irish usually settled in the underdeveloped parts of town or near market areas. The streets near their residences were routinely inundated with carrion, raw sewage, offal, and stagnant water — perfect for yellow fever, malaria-transmitting mosquitoes, and deadly pathogens. In 1852, a cholera epidemic killed large numbers of Irish New Orleanians. Sickly famine migrants were responsible for starting in 1847 the only typhus epidemic ever experienced by the Crescent City.⁴³ Yellow fever, however, remained the most dangerous of the region’s infectious diseases. Physician and lifelong yellow fever researcher Josiah Clark Nott noted that “yellow fever, the mighty monarch of the South, who scorns the rude field and forest, plants his scepter in the centre and drives all other fevers to the outskirts.”⁴⁴

Many Irish immigrants did not survive the 1853 epidemic. By 2 July of that year, only 46 people had died within the city limits of New Orleans. One month later, however, another 1,387 had fallen mortally ill. One observer noted that “ninety-nine of every hundred dying, were of [the] poor and foreign population.” When the pestilence finally subsided, the death toll had reached 8,000.⁴⁵ The horrendous human destruction continued in other southern towns. The fever spread up the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, Natchez, Vicksburg, and Memphis and also along the Gulf Coast to Mobile. In Mobile the Irish death rate rose dramatically during the months of August, September, and October as the “mighty monarch” raged.⁴⁶

The 1853 epidemic abated in late October. Despite the best efforts of local hospitals and the Howard Association, which had been founded by New Orleans businessmen in 1837 specifically to deal with epidemics, the Irish death toll was heavy.⁴⁷ Not yet aware that mosquitoes transmitted the disease, local commentators blamed the outbreak and the Irish mortality rate on the lack of immunity among the new settlers, as well as the “filthy living habits” of the lower orders.⁴⁸ Even Americans sympathetic to the plight of the sick recognized that the Irish were more likely than

natives to contract the dreaded fever. Jesuit priest Father Robert Woodley went to Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, during an 1855 epidemic “to save the lives of foreign priests.” His fears for the Irish clergy there were justified, as the pastors in both cities caught “Yellow Jack.” Left with the task of anointing the sick and burying the dead, Woodley worked tirelessly to ease the suffering of natives and Irish alike. He “assisted” one William Scully before his death and one Bridget Keon, as well as the “leading Irish Democrat” in Norfolk. The young Jesuit did not forget the less socially prominent Irish workers at the Norfolk Naval Yard when they also fell ill. Eventually, he lost track of “every baptism [or] help [to the] sick or dying” he performed, but he estimated that he had assisted nearly 300 people during the course of the epidemic.⁴⁹ It is no wonder that contemporaries described the dreaded fever as “stranger’s disease.”⁵⁰

The Irish who survived this pestilence did not necessarily prosper. Records and documents confirm that for many Irish the almshouse was only a “short step” away; the Irish were overrepresented there throughout the South.⁵¹ Irish men and women, out of work or incapacitated by injury or old age, often ended up in workhouses where conditions were harsh and disease and death a constant reality.⁵² After the Irish arrived in the South, charitable hospitals and orphan asylums also were overwhelmed with new admissions. Many orphans were second-generation Irish, indicating that their parents had settled and then fallen on hard times, or died.⁵³

Hard times for the Irish also put pressure on southern law enforcement. Available crime figures show a high representation of Irish people. City and county jails in southern towns usually contained a preponderance of foreign inmates, with the Irish usually making up the largest group.⁵⁴ State penitentiaries housed natives mostly but also had their fair share of Irish men. The majority of Irish inmates in state prisons were in trouble because of their appetites rather than their poverty. For example, most Irish prisoners in the Virginia State Penitentiary were not poor laborers but tradesmen ranging from blacksmith to weaver.⁵⁵

Most Irish crime involved petty larceny, illegal sale of liquor, and burglary. Occasionally, Irish subordinates stole from their employers. One Peter J. O’Connor stole “a chestnut sorrel mare” along with “a good spring saddle, a stiff bit bridle, a pare [*sic*] of new saddle bags, and a plaid cloak,” from a Mississippi planter.⁵⁶ A Natchez businessman warned his fellow townsmen to “beware of swindlers,” particularly the Irish man who robbed his store. The clever Irish clerk tried to persuade his accuser that the store had been robbed while he lay drunk and asleep behind the counter. His lie was unsuccessful and he fled the jurisdiction.⁵⁷

Most Irish thievery did not involve any detailed scheming. A New Orleans court fined John Shally for stealing a bag of potatoes and then

attempting to sell it as his own in the Poydras market. A Mrs. Duff, her husband, and two other Irish accomplices appeared before the same court for stealing a dray.⁵⁸ Convicted of the more serious crime of horse stealing, James O'Donnell of Mobile received ten years in the state penitentiary. In the same city, Mary McElhany was indicted for harboring stolen goods, and James Brogan appeared before that city's courts for stealing clothes from a captain's cabin on a schooner.⁵⁹

Irish criminals did, however, occasionally attempt grand, rather than petty, larceny. For example, an Alabama court convicted John Whalen and Michael Kelly of armed robbery. More often, Irish violent crime involved knives and fists rather than pistols. A group of Irish boardinghouses near the river in New Orleans were dangerous places to visit. Even the city's policemen entered the streets near these rough hostelries with trepidation.⁶⁰ One local policeman in Natchez received a severe beating for attempting to break up "eight to ten Irish men fighting."⁶¹ In Savannah, the Irish in the "eastern section of the city and their children . . . were great fighters." A northern visitor to this city noted that the Irish were "grand movers in all disturbances." Rough "country crackers from the surrounding countryside suffered when they got among the Hibernians."⁶²

Most Irish men, however, inflicted violence on one another rather than on outsiders. In Natchez, an Irish crowd chased a fellow Irishman, called McCabe, over the bluff. Since the mob was under the impression that McCabe had killed another Irishman, they intended to lynch him. The local militia, the Natchez Fencibles, saved the unfortunate McCabe from the noose, but they could not save his "house" from being thrown into the Mississippi River.⁶³ Two Irish men, Michael O'Brien and James McBride, with a Colt revolver and a derringer respectively, shot at each other on the streets of Mobile. O'Brien, peeved at being called "a liar" by McBride, initiated the gunfight, which ended when one of the pistols "exploded." Memphis, too, occasionally had an Irish "shindig" involving firearms.⁶⁴

Alcohol often was the catalyst for Irish violence. According to a Mobile newspaper, James Murphy was one of those who had "no respect for the majesty of the law and who violate[d] it whenever they inspire[d] within themselves a reckless, brutal courage by getting drunk." The "powerful" Murphy beat "an Italian, in a brutal manner." At his trial, Murphy constantly interrupted the judge, who eventually charged him with contempt. The judge's action did not stop the foolhardy Murphy, whose unruly conduct forced a policeman to hit him "on his knob [head]." Apparently, the officer may have welcomed the chance to even the score, for during Murphy's arrest, "the brawny Irishman nearly [whipped] the entire force sent out to capture him."⁶⁵

Other Irish men also harmed themselves through the abuse of alcohol. Mobile police put one Timothy Dolan in the local guardhouse because he had “delirium tremens” and they wanted to have him properly cared for, “lest death ensue.”⁶⁶ A visitor to Natchez saw a drunken Irishman fall from one of the bluffs alongside the Mississippi River, but fortunately he survived “by sliding into a sandbar.”⁶⁷

To be fair to Irish southerners, they were certainly not alone in their tendency toward violence and alcohol abuse. Violence pervaded the antebellum South, and “combatants represented all white classes.”⁶⁸ One contemporary on a Mississippi River steamboat noted that “Americans drink on all occasions whether from sociability or self-indulgence, at all times from rosy morn to dewy eve, and long after.”⁶⁹ Antebellum correspondence reveals a significantly high occurrence of “alcoholic illnesses and deaths” within southern families.⁷⁰ Using any social occasion to partake of spirits, “nineteenth-century [Americans] may not have been ‘a nation of drunkards’ but they were certainly enjoying a spectacular binge.”⁷¹

Nevertheless, involvement in crime, violence, and alcohol highlights the difficult time the Irish had adjusting to their new lives. They often lived in slumlike conditions and suffered premature mortality. Some undoubtedly did leave the South, but even more Irish replaced them, because the opportunities outweighed the risks.⁷² Opportunities for livelihood and success outweighed the dangers of the southern climate for the Irish immigrants, as indeed they did for every voluntary European arriving in the region since the founding of Jamestown. Michael Gleeson of Charleston advised his father at home in Ireland, who was contemplating coming to America, to come to South Carolina, which the younger Gleeson believed was “better than perishing yourself in the north for seven dollars a month.”⁷³ Robert McElderry thought Virginia “a decent place” for a tailor to make a living, and his brother believed that while initial expenses for a store were somewhat high, profits were too.⁷⁴ John Crampton left Derry for New York City in the early 1850s, but he “did not succeed.” Instead, he went as far as Nashville looking for work and unfortunately fell ill. Ready to give up and return to Ireland, he “was advised to try New Orleans.” Impressed with the Deep South and the accomplishments of Irish acquaintances, he decided to stay. He later moved to Natchez, where he “[made] money and [took] care of it besides his salary.”⁷⁵ Thady Mulcahy communicated to a friend in New York City proclaiming the good fortune he had achieved in moving to Mobile. “No longer does necessity urge me to stoop in labour,” Mulcahy wrote, and he was delighted to add that he was moving up the social ladder now that he had “a nice little house.”⁷⁶

In the countryside, John McDowell, a small planter in Fayette County, Tennessee, complained of the “intolerable heat” but felt good about his economic prospects in the South. He was sure that nearby Memphis was “destined to be a great city.” A visiting cousin from Ireland confirmed his optimism by telling the young rural entrepreneur “he liked the country that I live in, better than anywhere else” in the United States.⁷⁷

Thus, many Irish immigrants in the South showed a rational upward mobility that any native-born American would have been proud of. Irish laborers also recognized the potential of the South. Peter Reynolds of Richmond wrote his father to tell him that he was working for one dollar a day, and “every man [earned] his bread by pretty hard labor.” Despite the hard work, Reynolds believed that there was “plenty of good employment [here] and you need never tip your hat for any man.” Trades were “easy to get into,” and an Irish friend had come to Virginia from a northern state and was “doing very well.”⁷⁸

The more pessimistic Pat Kennedy, working on a railroad near Strasburg, Virginia, noted that he had seen numerous Irish men “kicked about in [this] foreign land.” He did not, however, vent his frustration on the South, but blamed “Yankee speculation” and “those very fellows [northerners]” who did “all in their power to enslave the poor emigrant who is white, while [they did] every thing in [their] power [to] raise funds to assist the slaves in America.” Kennedy remained objective enough to recommend that Irish migrants buy land in the South, although the West was better, and to say that “servant girls” could do well in the region.⁷⁹

Work was hard in the South, but there were chances for success. Honest labor, it seems, was rewarded. As Peter Reynolds stated, the region was a place where even laborers did not have to “tip their hat” for any man. This reality stood in stark contrast to Ireland, where work was just as hard but without the same opportunity for success. The added burden of working hard to serve landlords, aristocrats, and an alien church made the roughest of southern conditions seem much better than life in Ireland. The South had given the Irish migrants a measure of independence and freedom they had never known in the mother country.

The classic example of Irish workers’ belief in their own worth, no matter how menial their work, is shown in their attitude toward relations with their employers.⁸⁰ When faced with adverse conditions, Irish laborers were not pliable victims of the southern economy. In 1844, some Irish laborers in Memphis struck in favor of a ten-hour workday.⁸¹ Another group of Irish Memphians sued their Irish “contractor” employer. The “national drollery” of both plaintiffs and defendant “combined to make the affair most humorous.” The judge was “hard put to maintain his own

gravity” at the antics of the Irish. Nevertheless, he did decide “all the suits” for the plaintiffs.⁸² Without having to use their “national drollery,” Irish workers at the Memphis Naval Yard struck in 1853 for higher wages and won a twenty-five-cent-per-day increase because of the shortage of laborers in the city at that time.⁸³

In New Orleans, Irish men played a major role in forming that city’s first labor union. Following the pattern of the period, the Screwman’s Benevolent Organization looked after the skilled workingmen of the wharves. Incorporated in 1847 to assist sick members and provide a “respectable burial” if death resulted, the organization went on to gain wage increases through two successful strikes in the 1850s.⁸⁴ Irishmen associated with the docks founded Savannah’s first union, the Workingmen’s Benevolent Association. Other Irish labor militancy affected work in mines, railroads, canals, and docks in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.⁸⁵

Irish women in domestic work also exploited their value to southern employers. Wealthier southerners often complained about the Irish “help” at home.⁸⁶ Irish domestics often tormented English-born New Orleans resident Thomas Wharton. One day in 1860 he had to “carry the market basket” for the first time in his life because his “Irish cook” had not returned from visiting friends. Her failure to show up for work had “for the 19th time from the same cause” thrown “the house [into] another perplexity.” He complained that “the demon of misrule . . . seems to have taken entire possession of the Irish menials, they demand \$15 a month and then do just as they please, go or stay, work or play, [at their pleasure].” The following year he again had the indignity of going to the market by himself, because “as it is Easter Sunday and my cook, being an Irish Catholic, must of course be permitted to attend the early services of ‘ill-mumbled mass.’ ”⁸⁷ Irish women, it appears, also exploited their advantages to the fullest.⁸⁸

Some Irish efforts at improvement in the South took a violent turn. During the construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad through Maryland and Virginia, Irish laborers exasperated their managers by their regular and violent reaction against the introduction of any new labor. Employers blamed alcohol and intra-ethnic differences for the strife. There was some truth to this belief, as groups of Irish men from the same parts of Ireland banded together as “Corkonians” or “Far-downers,” got drunk, and engaged in bitter fights against each other. Nevertheless, rational self-interest was as important a motive for violence as irrational drunkenness and “county” prejudice. By displaying their militancy the Irish workers made their employers wary of introducing any policies adverse to working conditions or wages.⁸⁹

Some Irish workers buried their differences and focused their anger directly on their bosses. The Irish on the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad destroyed company property and threatened managers. In Savannah, only the pleadings of Father Jeremiah O'Neill Sr. in English and in two dialects of Gaelic spared the city from a mob of angry unpaid Irish railroad workers. In Charleston in 1855 a group of similar Irish workers through intimidation forced all railroad construction to stop after discovering that their employer had arbitrarily reduced their wages from \$1.25 to \$1.00 a day. The threat of militia action eventually quelled the disturbance.⁹⁰ A prominent citizen in Richmond worried about 400 Irish laborers on the local James and Kanawha Canal who "continued to refuse to work" and who had purchased "old muskets" from "some Jew shopkeeper." The local "volunteers" were ready to respond to any serious trouble, but none had occurred at that time, except for "the firing of shots" along the canal. Nevertheless, the frightened Virginian took the extreme precaution of arming his "negroes each with a good scythe blade" just in case the Irish "vagabonds" invaded his property.⁹¹

Even the "rootless" Irish stood up for themselves on occasion. The mayor of St. Francisville, Louisiana, had "to quell an Irish insurrection" by calling out the militia. This show of force sent the riotous Irish back to their "shantys [*sic*]." Despite the fact that the Irish had remained "remarkably peaceable and docile," the mayor lamented his task of having to control them and other "floating populations."⁹²

In their struggle for better wages and conditions, the Irish exhibited a keen business sense. The renewed cotton boom of the 1850s, allied with the increase in public works, created a labor shortage. Slave prices increased as country planters required them to plant more cotton. This rural demand drained slaves from towns and cities.⁹³ The growing slave shortage made some prominent southerners call for the reopening of the African slave trade, which had been banned since 1808 by the U.S. Congress.⁹⁴

The high value of slaves made it vital for slaveholders to protect their property from disease and death, and the cotton boom enticed owners to keep their human chattels at home rather than hire them out to railroad contractors. The Irish exploited this situation to bargain for better wages. Planters and businessmen looked for laborers with enticements of good pay and "dry work."⁹⁵ One Louisiana overseer complained about the high price of Irish laborers, but he quickly realized that it was cheaper in the long run to use Irish men for ditching and clearing land "than to use up good field hands in such severe employment."⁹⁶ At a meeting in Norfolk, Virginia, a local booster stated "that one day's labor of an Irishman" on a canal project "would do more to advance and insure final

Southern commercial and financial independence than all the speeches, resolutions, essays, and editorials in the world.”⁹⁷ To many natives, the Irish in the South were a valuable part of the economy.

Considering these explicit statements of the importance of Irish labor, Frederick L. Olmsted should not have been surprised to see Irish railroad workers in Mississippi earning wages double those paid in the North. Nor should he have been astonished to find it “plainly perceptible that the white working men in New Orleans have more business-like manners and more assured self-respect, than those of smaller towns.” He went on: “They are even not without some *esprit de corps*.”⁹⁸ Therefore, Irish workers could be confident of their position in the southern economy. They could believe, as one Irishman in Virginia wrote, “The prospects of emigrants are rapidly increasing each day.”⁹⁹ When those prospects worsened, they tried to halt any slide in their own economic standing through strikes and occasional violence. Irish southerners adapted well to the southern economy. A few reached the pinnacle of the economic pyramid. Even more did very well with their business or trade. The rest of the Irish survived poor housing, sporadic violence, the almshouse, and epidemics and gained more in the South than they would have by staying home to “work almost for nothing.”¹⁰⁰

CHAPTER FOUR

FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND ETHNIC AWARENESS

Despite economic opportunities, Irish immigrants still needed family and community support networks to help them adjust to their new lives in the South. Families in Ireland and America assisted each other to get settled, find work, and deal with their homesickness. While not segregated or truly ghettoized, the Irish in the South did create neighborhoods that attracted new migrants. They also founded social organizations to celebrate their Irishness. Both pre- and postfamine migrants sought their fellow countrymen in the South and assisted new arrivals. Although economically better off in the South, they missed the community life they had left behind in Ireland. Because of this ethnic awareness, the Irish southerner remained interested in Ireland on both a personal and national level. The vibrancy of Irish communities and their associations in the South gave their presence there significance beyond the workforce. This continued cultural awareness counters the view that Irish immigrants' Irishness disintegrated in the South. A visitor to the towns of the Old South was actually more likely to see an Irish immigrant at a shipping office sending money to loved ones in Ireland or a notice of a Hibernian meeting than to see a transient, rootless "Paddy" earning a living in a disease-infested swamp. The Irish did not disappear into the Old South. Their retention of Irish connections, in the region and at home, hindered their total assimilation, but not their integration, into southern society. Ethnic awareness, in fact, helped that process by giving them the stability and confidence to take a fuller role in southern affairs.

Family connections remained strong among the Irish because for many immigrants family played the key role in bringing them to the South. Alice Sharkey's brother met her in 1843 at New Orleans and brought her to live in St. Helena Parish. In 1857 Michael Gleeson provided explicit information for his father's journey from Ireland to Charleston, including how to avoid being cheated by cabbies and packet operators when he changed ships in New York City. William McElderry came from Ireland to live with his brother in Lynchburg, Virginia; Hugh Pidgeon joined his

brother in Savannah, Georgia, after having a difficult time finding work in New York.¹ Occasionally, sad family news from the South provided opportunity for relatives in Ireland. In 1822, James Francis Tracy came to Virginia to take over an estate left to him by his deceased uncle. John Carr replaced his dead brother as overseer on a North Carolina farm in 1853.² Even those migrants who forged their own path in the South kept in touch with family members in the region.³

Some migrants without the advantage of relatives in the South brought their families with them, but the “vast majority” of pre- and postfamine migrants came as individuals. During the famine, however, family migration was very common. Desperate economic straits in Ireland forced older people and children to join the migration. Passenger lists during the famine show large numbers of families arriving in northern and southern ports.⁴

Those who came as individuals often formed their own families through marriage. The famine migrants, however, were less likely to marry immediately. They usually married at an older age, and young single adults dominated Irish populations in southern towns.⁵ The experience of the famine frightened Irish people against the idea of marrying young and having many children, and this fear had a profound impact on Irish families in America.

Family had always been an integral part of Gaelic society. Early Celtic law, the *brehon*, emphasized kinship over individualism. Thus, primogeniture, despite English efforts to enforce it, remained alien to the Irish. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Irish farmers divided their meager holdings among their sons. This partible inheritance “under conditions of explosive population growth led inevitably to pauperization.”⁶ The dominance of small landholdings left many Irish farmers vulnerable to disasters like the Great Famine. Parliament, of course, had exacerbated their vulnerability with the “Gregory clause.” Reluctant to relinquish their homesteads, many small farmers tried to survive without relief. Their wives and children suffered most from this decision.⁷

Life in America similarly challenged Irish families. The unstable and often dangerous nature of Irish work made widows and orphans of Irish wives and children. Geographical mobility in America led to many abandonments. Mobile’s orphanages included inmates whose Irish parents were alive but recorded as “missing.”⁸ Immigrant mobility also attacked the traditional restraints of a Catholic marriage. In 1855, Mrs. Ellen O’Malley and her “husband,” named “Coffy,” commenced a new life in New Orleans. She had abandoned her first husband and children, and her former confessor felt that she and Coffy were “wicked enough to approach the sacraments, concealing their adulterous lives.”⁹

Abandonment might have been preferable for some Irish spouses. Like strife in the workplace, fondness for alcohol caused the Irish serious domestic problems. In 1859 the Mobile mayor's court charged one Edward Dwyer with whipping his wife and "breaking the household furniture." Dwyer escaped with a reprimand by showing that he was "an industrious and hard working man when sober."¹⁰ A Vicksburg, Mississippi, reporter blamed "John Barleycorn" for Denis Gleason's "knocking [his wife] into next week." Pat Devine, also of Mobile, could not blame drink for his violence. He received a \$400 fine for giving his wife "a pounding," which, according to a neighbor, had occurred weekly for nearly two years.¹¹

Nevertheless, many Irish men treated their wives with love and respect. Edward Murphy, a clerk in a New Orleans store, showered his fiancée with affection. When they parted he wrote: "If I am not with you in body, I am always in spirit." After they married and had their first child, Murphy longed for both his wife and son when away from their new home in Thibodaux, Louisiana.¹² Edward Conigland of North Carolina rivaled Murphy in wooing a wife and showering her with affection. When apart he realized "how essential is Mary Wiatt to my happiness through life." He intended to "overwhelm her with manuscripts," which he did throughout their life together.¹³

Conigland had an added incentive in seeking Mary as his wife. He was a widower with a young daughter. Along with expressing his love for Mary, his letters to her included major concern for the welfare of his daughter.¹⁴ While some Irish parents abandoned their children, many, like Conigland, showed interest in their welfare. For example, on the death of her mother in 1850, Margaret Rogers's father left her at St. Mary's Orphan Asylum in Mobile. Nine months later, however, he took her home.¹⁵

Irish parental concern for children went beyond childhood. Patrick Cantwell of Charleston, South Carolina, fretted constantly over his son's new life in New Orleans. Cantwell warned his offspring to pray to God for protection from the "many dangers[,] seductions[,] trials and temptations to which you are now exposed." He advised his son: "Be not a moment idle," and avoid drunks, liars, and "the profane." It is not known what John thought of his father's advice, but he did seek his father's counsel on many business and personal matters.¹⁶

As in Ireland, the Irish southerner's concept of kinship was strong. Unmarried Irish migrants often got help from extended families. Aunts and uncles took charge of orphaned nieces and nephews.¹⁷ June Armstrong, of Hampshire County, Virginia, kept in close contact with cousins scattered from Pennsylvania to South Carolina.¹⁸ Daniel Griffin, a Georgia railroad agent, looked after his profligate brother, George. George,

an alcoholic, had bankrupted himself. Often frustrated, Daniel supported his brother and took comfort when the prodigal stayed away from the bottle.¹⁹

Family could be a curse or a blessing for Irish southerners, but having relatives nearby usually eased adaptation to the South. Patrick Murphy, the Irish builder from Rodney, Mississippi, missed his family terribly. Despite his success and relative prosperity, he suffered severe bouts of melancholia. In April 1858, while recovering from a wound received while breaking up a fight, Murphy wrote: “[G]od help me. I am miserable.” He blamed his misery on some curse that had scattered his family like “chaff.” He wondered “why is a man so desolate and lonely in a town full of people” and contrasted his unhappy situation with that of the joy and love he witnessed among the Irish and southern families he visited.²⁰

Those Irish who missed the company of family turned to fellow countrymen instead. In southern towns, Irish migrants formed their own neighborhoods, which attracted new migrants in search of work, social activities, and contact with home. Although these neighborhoods were often rough and unhealthy, their benefits outweighed the dangers. As one historian has noted, ethnic communities helped immigrants deal with the severe feelings of “dislocation” they had suffered during their migration experience.²¹

In New Orleans, the Irish lived in every one of the city’s wards but concentrated in several. The earliest Irish residents settled in the “American section” close to the Mississippi River. Their *faubourg* (suburb), St. Mary, was known as Irish Channel, and many famine migrants settled there too. Upriver in the city of Lafayette (annexed by New Orleans in 1852), numerous Irish lived near the wharves. Downriver, on the other side of the *Vieux Carré*, some famine Irish moved into the sparsely populated Third Municipality. However, this Irish and German district never really became an ethnic community like “uptown” in the American section.²² The second and third wards in this section contained rich and poor Irish immigrants. In 1860, the third ward’s Irish residents ranged from M. Brady, a commission merchant with real estate valued at \$30,000, to laborer Dennis Cochran, who was trying to rear his family with no real or personal estate.²³ Even before the famine influx, this neighborhood contained the largest Irish community in the Old South, including an Irish market, “Irish” church, Catholic school, the workhouse, and the Catholic girls’ orphanage.²⁴

In other southern towns, the Irish did not live in strictly segregated exclusion, but as in New Orleans, they concentrated in certain areas. In Memphis, Tennessee, the Irish dominated the “Pinch” district north of downtown; in Savannah, they lived primarily in the poorer wards east



St. Patrick's Church, Camp Street, New Orleans. The first parish church of the uptown Irish, St. Patrick's was established in 1833. The cornerstone of this structure was laid in 1838. (Author's collection)

and west of the town's older section.²⁵ In Charleston and Mobile, most Irish lived close to the docks or on the edge of town. In Richmond, the Irish resided near the tobacco warehouses and the Tredegar Iron Works. Smaller towns such as Augusta also had their own Irish sections, which were usually close to rivers or on the outskirts of town.²⁶

These Irish sections became much more conspicuous when the famine migrants arrived. Their sheer numbers and keen awareness of their Irishness, which developed during the famine and the British government's lack of response to it, added an unprecedented vibrancy to these neighborhoods. In 1854, one uptown New Orleans resident, having noticed a crowd leaving the St. Theresa of Avila Church after Mass (this church was constructed to deal with the famine influx), said he believed that "all Ireland seemed to be streaming from its portals." He continued: "It is astonishing how large an element they form in our resident population, that is the Irish. A stranger from Dublin or Londonderry might fancy himself at home again on our streets, especially about the time of 'matins' or 'vespers.'" ²⁷

The greater relative poverty of the famine refugees as compared with earlier migrants meant that they needed an Irish network even more than their more prosperous predecessors. Nonetheless, even the most established Irish in the Old South craved relations with their fellow countrymen from the Emerald Isle. Hibernian societies, in particular, filled that need. Founded by the earliest Irish settlers, often refugees of the 1798 rebellion, these societies provided contacts and entertainment for the more prosperous Irish migrants. James Black liked to dine and drink with his fellow members of the Charleston Hibernian Society. He continued the tradition of the founders who met every fourth Thursday to engage in "sentiment, song, and supper." Reflecting its ecumenical nature and the strong Ulster presence in Charleston, the society alternated Catholics and Protestants in its presidency. In 1833, for example, the Hibernians felt at ease toasting the king's health along with the memory of the executed republican rebel Robert Emmet. By 1841 the society had constructed a magnificent "Hibernian Hall" on Meeting Street.²⁸

Hibernian societies in New Orleans and Savannah also provided social distractions for the more prominent Irish citizens, particularly on St. Patrick's Day. The celebrations became more elaborate in the 1820s and 1830s and continued through the famine immigration. On these occasions prominent immigrants, both Catholic and Protestant, fraternized with the native elite. They undoubtedly eased any potential sectarian tensions.²⁹ On St. Patrick's Day 1824, following requiem Mass, the members of the Savannah Hibernian Society marched to the City Hotel with Father Robert Browne and the pastors of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. At four o'clock, the mayor of the city, along with the British and Spanish consuls, arrived for the bestowing of honorary membership upon Irish-born Bishop John England of Charleston. After this ceremony, all had dinner and watched the unveiling of a "transparency . . . containing a female figure, clothed in green, and her brows entwined with a wreath of Shamrock; intended as a representation of the genius of Ireland." The banqueters filled the remainder of the evening with toasts and tunes paying homage to Ireland, Georgia, and the United States.³⁰

The Hibernian societies of smaller Irish communities also marked St. Patrick's Day with gala activities. The Natchez Hibernian Society had its St. Patrick's celebration at a local hotel. The participants had a great night of "song, sentiment, wit, and sociability."³¹ Some less well-off Irish laborers in Natchez collected near the markethouse on St. Patrick's Day in 1837 and spent the day drinking. They became inebriated and fought everyone who came their way. The Adams County sheriff called out the local militia to quell the revelers and consigned two or three of them to

jail.³² St. Patrick's Day was the day to celebrate your Irishness in the South no matter what your social class.³³

The contrast between the Hibernian and laborer celebrations highlights the exclusive nature of the societies. Prosperous Irish men dominated Hibernian organizations. They charged annual fees that deterred the lower elements from joining, and some limited membership to one hundred.³⁴ Nevertheless, the more prosperous Irish did create an alternative image of the Irish man in the South. They undoubtedly eased stereotypes of the "transient Paddy." They could have abandoned their Irishness to avoid any connection with their rowdier compatriots, but they did not. Instead, they tried to help the poorer immigrant by example. Societies and clubs were vital elements of American urban culture. Being a member of one was a sign of status and sophistication. Thus, along with personifying the potential for substantial Irish economic success, the elite Irish pointed novice immigrants to a cultural opportunity that would aid immensely in their integration into southern society.³⁵

The poorer Irish quickly sought their own social organizations. Militias in particular were attractive to working-class Irish men. Often commanded by richer "Hibernians," the majority of Irish militia members were of humbler circumstances. Founded in 1843, the Savannah-based Irish Jasper Greens, for example, included at least fifty-seven laborers. Many family members of the Irish Volunteers of Charleston faced destitution when their only breadwinner left to fight the Seminole Indians in Florida. Irish New Orleanians established their own militia companies when they found themselves barred from the city's more snobbish units.³⁶

The Irish militias were very active. The Jasper Greens met regularly to drill and for target practice. The various militias also marched in local parades, attended funerals, and escorted St. Patrick's Day parades.³⁷ These ethnic organizations helped to create a favorable impression of the Irish among the population and gave their members a status beyond that of their occupations. When the Irish Volunteers returned to Charleston from their expedition against the Seminoles in Florida, the town turned out to greet them. The city's other militia companies saluted the Irish heroes. One local newspaper declared: "A civil feast awaits those brave and generous men and their gallant officers, in further testimonial of the high and grateful esteem in which their fellow-citizens hold their gallantry, humanity, and patriotism."³⁸ This kind of sentiment must have had a profound impact on the self-image of even the poorest Irish Charlestonian.

Temperance gave the poorer Irish another opportunity to make a favorable impression on more prosperous neighbors. In 1839, Father Theobald Mathew, a Capuchin priest based in Cork, Ireland, started a

temperance crusade throughout Ireland. Highly successful, Mathew's efforts quickly gained support across the Atlantic Ocean. In New Orleans, Father Ignatius Mullon, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, organized the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society. Mullon administered "the pledge" after High Mass every Sunday, and his society grew rapidly. Abstinence from alcohol did not prevent the members of St. Patrick's from celebrating St. Patrick's Day, and in 1842 the society was "the pride" of the city's parade.³⁹

The efforts of Father Mullon and others received a boost from Father Mathew himself when he visited the South in 1850. In New Orleans he gained 13,000 new pledges. At Memphis he spent two weeks gathering 700 converts.⁴⁰ For two weeks the priest visited Natchez, where he preached to capacity crowds at the Catholic St. Mary's Cathedral. "Throngs of Catholics and Protestants" pledged abstinence as they knelt at the altar rails in St. Mary's. Delighted with his visit, the city's temperance supporters promised to collect money for Mathew's travel expenses.⁴¹ Though many pledges "fell off the wagon" when Father Mathew returned to Ireland, the temperance crusade provided many Irish with an opportunity to socialize while also benefitting their health, pockets, and families.

Irish community leaders did more than just lead by example. The Hibernian societies sometimes had "benevolent" in their titles and practiced philanthropy toward both old and new settlers. Founded in 1822, Mobile's Hibernian Benevolent Society provided "an asylum to every oppressed Irishman" and collected donations for widows, orphans, and invalids.⁴² The Charleston Hibernians allotted funds at every meeting to help new arrivals. In December 1838, their relief committee granted \$25.00 to help Robert McCutcheon move his family to Wellington, South Carolina; \$20.00 "relief" to a Mrs. Duggan; and \$40.75 to pay the board of ten persons on the *Canton*, docked at Charleston. The Hibernian Society also aided the wives and families of the Irish Volunteers in Florida.⁴³ Irish newspaper editors likewise tried to help immigrants with information about naturalization rules and free education, as well as tips on how to adapt to life in the South.⁴⁴

The huge famine migration put a large strain on Irish aid to new migrants. Vere Foster lamented the lack of a well-organized immigrant aid society in New Orleans. Newspaper editor J. C. Prendergast, who lived in the poorer "famine" Irish community in the Third Municipality, complained that the more prosperous "uptown" Irish were not doing enough to help the famine refugees. Finding only lethargy in the Hibernian Society, Prendergast formed the Irish Union Immigrant Society in 1850, which did some good but folded after one year because of a lack of funds.

Disillusioned by his failure, the egotistical editor of the *Orleanian* refused to organize a new society. He did, however, allow others to use his columns for immigrant aid, but, like Prendergast, they had little success.⁴⁵

While other southern Irish communities did not have a scale of migration on a par with New Orleans, they too found unprecedented demands for aid. In 1850, some Irish Charlestonians formed the "Irish Mutual Benevolent Society" to promote "charity" in that city.⁴⁶ Atlanta's Irish founded their Hibernian Benevolent Society in 1858, specifically to "help immigrants and the wives and orphans of Irish Railroad workers."⁴⁷

Despite these efforts, Prendergast's criticisms of the "lace-curtain" Irish had some merit. The organized Irish efforts to help new migrants were inadequate, especially when compared to German immigrant aid. The Germans, however, did not have as many of their countrymen to deal with over such a relatively short period of time. The famine influx overwhelmed the Hibernian societies' relief committees. Since their inception they had provided aid for their less fortunate countrymen and must have felt frustrated at the task they faced in the late 1840s and early 1850s.⁴⁸

Irish southerners' individual efforts took up a large part of the slack. A few examples will suffice as an illustration of the Irish connection that stretched across class lines. Louisiana sugar planter Maunsel White helped new immigrants move out of New Orleans. One D. M. Carroll of Little Rock aided Irish-born Bishop Andrew Byrne to bring a group of Irish migrants from Liverpool, England, to Arkansas.⁴⁹ Many famine migrants found accommodations and work in the burgeoning Irish neighborhoods. For example, young migrants James Twomey, P. O'Riordan, and Bernard Collins all lived with Irish-born butcher James Lee in Lafayette's first ward, while Robert Sullivan, a sugar broker in the old Third Municipality of New Orleans, employed three Irish women as "domestics" to rear his six young children. In Mobile, Matthew Quinn employed two Irish clerks and a laborer in his store.⁵⁰

Outside of the larger cities, other Irish southerners noted their compatriots' problems upon arriving in the South. While visiting New Orleans with his family, a resident of Paulding, Mississippi, met a young Irish girl in a convent there. Her father had sent money to her in Ireland for her passage to visit him in Washington, D.C. Unable to find a ship direct to the capital, she went to New Orleans instead and ended up penniless and lost. The visitors took pity on her plight and brought her to Paulding. The "lost Irish girl" never found her father, but she did find an Irish husband at Paulding's "Irishtown" and lived there for the rest of her life.⁵¹

In rural North Carolina, Thomas McDowell, whose father had come to the South after the failed 1798 rebellion, continued to display an aware-

ness of his Irish roots. He kept in touch with his cousins in Ireland and America. He also took pity on young famine migrant Patrick Carr and hired him to manage his farm. Following Carr's accidental death, McDowell sent money to the Irishman's mother in Ireland and hired Patrick's brother John, fresh from the Emerald Isle, to be his new manager.⁵²

Some established migrants were not as kind. While taking care of his father's business interests in New Orleans and Jackson, Mississippi, Charles Tiernan "formed an unfavorable opinion" of a "blatherskite talking South of Ireland man" who had been employed by his father. Tiernan feared that this Irishman would not be a good manager. He wrote: "It will be a world of trouble to drill him and make him understand the accounts . . . he has been annoying me all day by an account of his life and adventures."⁵³ William Hill, a Scots Irish settler in Abbeville, South Carolina, resented the "ignorant, unpolished, and uncivilized . . . rowdy class of Irish in this little town and neighborhood, mostly of the *Real Irish*, or papist stock." He feared that "*untravelled* Americans" thought that this "poor sample" of the Irish in America represented all Irish people.⁵⁴

Conversely, John McKowen, an Irish merchant in Jackson, Louisiana, developed a reputation for helping Irish men. In April 1837, one P. Henasy, then incarcerated in the Baton Rouge prison, wrote to proclaim his innocence. "Many a sleepless night have I passed since I arrived here," the hapless Henasy wrote, earnestly hoping that McKowen would obtain his release.⁵⁵

Without ethnic beneficence, many Irish migrants would have failed to survive in the South. A cursory look at the census returns shows how much work poorer and younger Irish found in the employ of their more settled countrymen and women. Personal testimonies give one an idea of what a boon it was to freshly arrived immigrants when they made contacts with older immigrants. For example, John McLaughlin's sisters had fretted about their brother's immigration from Belfast to Savannah. Upon arriving in the city, he quickly got a job and a loan from established Irish Savannahian Michael Dillon. His bragging about the help he had received prompted one sister to write: "I suppose nearly all the people in Savannah are Irish men?" McLaughlin seemed to have settled so well that his sister feared that he was no longer proud of where he came from.⁵⁶

Other Irish relatives may have had the same fears, but the evidence of Irish southerners' continuing contact and interest in Ireland suggests that these fears were unjustified. Patrick Murphy often thought of home but usually with a hint of melancholy. He reminisced fondly about playing as a youth and remarked: "What calm pleasure I felt with my companions." Despite this pleasant memory, his "soul [felt] overpowered

with anguish” when he realized that he no longer had any connection with Ireland.⁵⁷

Homesickness was a reality for Irish southerners, whether Protestant or Catholic. Robert McElderry longed to be home for Christmas and hoped that his nephews remembered that they had an uncle in Virginia “who would love to see them.”⁵⁸ David Thomson of Charleston reminded his cousin that he had not forgotten “his playmates in Ballynure.”⁵⁹ John Campbell of Vermillionville, Louisiana, wanted to meet and “embrace” the friends of his youth but wrote philosophically: “We are now separated never perhaps to meet again in this side of eternity, but God’s will be done.”⁶⁰ Moses Paul was not as proper in his correspondence home. He complained that his friends in Ireland did not send him enough letters. He managed, however, to think kindly of the girls he left behind in Magherafelt, County Derry. One young lady in particular, he believed, was “large” enough to keep him warm in winter. She would not, however, have been useful to him in the summer because “the thermometer stands at 95 [degrees] at midnight.” He continued: “Lord help me, what an infernal perspiration she would be in. The thought of it has brought tears to my eyes laughing.”⁶¹

Just as they inspired happy memories, letters from Ireland could also dash pleasant thoughts of home. Irish men and women suffering economic hardship pleaded with relatives, friends, and acquaintances in the South for aid. Rebecca Fleming thanked Michael Rogers of New Orleans for his “kindly remittance” and asked him to “admonish kindly” her children for not keeping good contact with her. According to Fleming, Rogers “would be discharging a filial duty by letting them [know] my humble and distressed circumstances.”⁶²

John Peters managed to get in touch with his “lost” son in New Orleans with the help of the Catholic chancery office there. Peters rejoiced to hear from his “dearest John” and also longed to see him come home, but if his offspring decided to stay, “his brothers would wish to go to him.” The father wrote of the hard times in Ireland since 1846—the beginning of the famine—and how “the poor were never able to recover from that day until present.” In particular, he wanted his son to contact one Arthur Trammin’s sister because “Any assistance from her would be much wanted as he is left without a mother . . . and has nine children to provide for in poor Ireland.”⁶³

The famine, in particular, pressured all Irish Americans to aid their native land. News from Ireland, in addition to American newspaper accounts, brought the full extent of the famine distress to their attention. A friend in dire straits from County Tyrone informed John McKowen that

the "condition of the poor is truly distressing" and would only get worse as "the total failure of the potato crop this season also, has blasted any faint hope." McKowen's correspondent feared for the country, because "oppression has driven the peasantry to desperation." In 1847 County Cork man M. Corrigan wrote to his son John in San Patricio, Texas. He remarked that the famine was "bad in Skiberreen" and that he and the rest of the family were in economic dire straits. He begged his son to "send us some assistance, and we shall forever be obliged to you."⁶⁴

The Hibernian Society of Charleston heard "the cry of wailing, lamentation, and woe" caused by "the unparalleled sufferings of their starving countrymen." They realized that hundreds of starving Irish had been seen following carts carrying corn in order to fight "with the ferocity of wolves for the prize" of a few loose grains. Spurred into action by these reports, the society called upon the multitudes of "Ireland's favorite sons" who lived in "the granary of the world" to organize immediate relief efforts.⁶⁵ Charleston's Hibernian relief committee quickly set up a special famine relief subcommittee with members in every ward of the city to collect money for Ireland. They also decided to petition local newspapers to reprint Dublin's Society of Friends' reports on famine distress there. They hoped to stimulate donations from every citizen and to highlight for the local Irish those parts of Ireland most affected.⁶⁶

The publicity efforts proved effective as donations poured in from all parts of Charleston, as well as from the rest of South Carolina and neighboring states. By 20 March 1847, the famine committee had received over \$14,000 and 400 bags of corn. They sent some of the aid to Ireland via the British Consul in Charleston and the rest directly to the Friends Committee in Dublin. The leaders of the relief effort were pleased to acknowledge "the generous sympathy to the poor of Ireland . . . exercised in this city and state, as well as the states of Georgia and North Carolina."⁶⁷

These organized efforts, however, paled in comparison to aid that individual Irish Americans sent home. Between 1850 and 1855, Irish immigrants sent back an annual average of £1.2 million, much of which paid for family passage to America. Local southern newspapers carried advertisements for shipping lines that were offering safe remittance of money to Ireland.⁶⁸

The Irish Emigrant Society, based in New York City, also provided a means for Irish workers to get their dollars changed into pounds and sent to a bank close to their relatives in Ireland. A group of railroad laborers working in rural southwestern Virginia took advantage of the society's service. Patrick Lyons sent \$75 to the main office. An agent there changed this amount into £10 and gave it to a passenger going to Ireland,

who in turn deposited the sum in the Bank of Ireland in Tralee, County Kerry, close to the Lyons family in Annascaul.⁶⁹ The more prosperous New Orleans merchant William Devlin persuaded the Emigrant Society to send large sums to his brother in County Donegal in care of the Derry agent of the Bank of Ireland.⁷⁰

Even in death, Irish southerners did not forget their loved ones back home. Enias Loughrey left money to his mother and sister in County Antrim, and Patrick Kelly wanted “any surplus” of his estate to go to his brother in Ireland. Hugh Mulligan bequeathed cash to his relatives in Ireland, but he also remembered his kin in America and the Catholic Female Orphan Asylum of Mobile.⁷¹

The horrifying news arriving from Ireland and the very visible destitution of the new arrivals only further instilled diaspora feelings among the prefamine Irish in the South. It seemed that they had secured the good fortune to escape Ireland. There may also have been some feelings of guilt over the contrast between their lives and those of their loved ones and neighbors they had left behind. These immigrants were frustrated with being unable to halt the catastrophe. Rather than becoming mired in self-criticism and depression, however, they vented their frustrations on the British and Anglo-Irish masters of Ireland. They became radicalized, and when they were joined by a larger and even more radical group that had experienced terrible times, the Irish in the South took a keen interest in Irish politics.⁷²

The post-1798 polarization in Irish politics had already influenced some of the earliest Irish immigrants in the South. Redmond O’Doherty of Natchez left Ireland in 1818 and believed that his native country had been “the victim of the most remorseless persecution, the most cruel oppression, and the most savage tyranny that ever was exercised on the face of the Globe.”⁷³ Back in Ireland, Daniel O’Connell used these sentiments to create the country’s first mass political movement. O’Connell, who had been shocked at the violence he witnessed while in school in revolutionary France, advocated political rather than paramilitary solutions for his Catholic Association. With a membership fee of one penny known as the “Catholic rent,” the Catholic Association attracted tens of thousands of disfranchised Irish Catholics. O’Connell harnessed Irish public opinion in an unprecedented manner, and through constitutional methods he himself forced Catholic “emancipation” by being elected to Parliament in 1828. Rather than deny him his seat and create a crisis, the British government relented and passed a Catholic emancipation bill the following year.⁷⁴

Irish southerners, both Catholic and Protestant, supported “the Liberator,” O’Connell. As early as 1824, the Savannah Hibernians raised a

toast to "Ireland's new hero." They hoped that he would "prove as invulnerable to the arrows of his enemies, as did the Beloved [George] Washington in Braddock's retreat."⁷⁵ In Charleston, the Hibernians believed that 1823 "should be marked with a bright stone in the calender of Ireland's history." Thanks to O'Connell and the Catholic Association, the Hibernians said, England's "Reign of Terror" halted and "Ireland once again possessed a political existence." The Charleston Friends of Ireland group, which had Irish Catholic and Protestant leadership, celebrated O'Connell's achievement with great gusto. They were particularly grateful to their native-born "liberal" neighbors who had supported the Irish cause so well.⁷⁶

This statement was true to a large extent. The Catholic Association sparked mass politics in Ireland and emboldened O'Connell to seek further concessions from the British government. In 1834, the Liberator introduced a bill in Parliament to repeal the union between Great Britain and Ireland. The House of Commons overwhelmingly rejected this "repeal" bill. Chastened by his defeat, O'Connell and like-minded Irish MPs tried to work with the Whig government for Irish reform. When this government lost power in 1841, O'Connell returned to his roots in extra-parliamentary activities and organized the Loyal National Repeal Association. With a membership "repeal rent" of one penny, the association tried, through "Monster Meetings" held throughout the country and the implicit threat of disorder, to put pressure on the British government.⁷⁷

Once again, Irish southerners, by virtue of contact with home and the coverage of Irish news in southern newspapers, supported O'Connell's new campaign.⁷⁸ Irish men organized repeal associations throughout the South. The Savannah group led by the Protestant George B. Cumming and the Catholic Michael Dillon vowed to support "revolt" if the British government refused to grant repeal peacefully.⁷⁹ When O'Connell expressed his opposition to slavery, however, and refused to accept money raised in the slave states, stating that "he would never purchase the freedom of Ireland with the price of slaves," Irish southerners distanced themselves from him.⁸⁰

Increasingly, Irish southerners embraced more radical militaristic forms of Irish nationalism. The seeds for this endorsement of violence were already sown. Many shared the feelings of Moses Paul, who wrote home to Ireland from Petersburg, Virginia, complaining that the landlords in Ireland "would see all [his] tenants expire in the agonies of hunger to gratify his vanity, or increase his rent roll." Echoing Paul's sentiments, Irish newspaper editor James Hagan of Mississippi advocated war against England.⁸¹

In Ireland, too, younger fiery nationalists refused to rule out violent

methods for ending English misrule. These more militant men, known as Young Ireland, initially supported O'Connell, but as the famine distress increased they became estranged from him. Leaving the Repeal Association in 1846, they founded their own Irish "Confederate Clubs," and some looked upon violence as "sacred" when used "for the assertion of a nation's liberty."⁸²

O'Connell died in 1847 and left the repeal movement to his son John. Lacking the charisma and organizational ability of his father, the younger O'Connell could not halt the Repeal Association's decline. Some Young Irelanders, such as John Mitchel, desperately and openly called for rebellion in 1848. Apprehensive at the growing belligerence among Mitchel and his ilk, the British authorities struck preemptively in March 1848 and arrested the fiery Irishman, suppressed his newspaper, and transported him to Australia. The remaining Young Irelanders, inspired as much by fear of arrest as by the revolutions sweeping Europe at that time, raised a somewhat farcical rebellion in July 1848. Poorly organized and led, the uprising failed miserably. Police quickly rounded up the ringleaders and sent most of them to prison colonies in Australia.⁸³

Excited at the prospect of revolution in Ireland, some Irish in New Orleans founded the new Irish League and Emmet Club to support military action against Britain. They sent over £1,000 to rebel leader William Smith O'Brien.⁸⁴ In Mobile the organizers of "The Friends of Ireland" believed that the European revolutions showed the way for the Irish in Ireland "to redeem their country from the evils of the British Union." With both Catholic and Protestant leadership, including Father James McGarahan as its treasurer, the new group intended to raise money from Irish and native citizens to help Ireland gain "political independence and republican rights." They encouraged native Alabamians to help because "[t]he country of Washington owes a large debt of gratitude to Ireland." In Charleston leading native-born citizens played a prominent role in organizing its "Association of the Friends of Irish Independence." The sixty-plus ward organizers for the association, however, were more likely to have names such as Hogan, Ryan, and O'Neill than those of South Carolina's first families. Savannah's Irish, meanwhile, hoped that Ireland could accomplish its own "reanimation" by arousing just "a remnant of that fierce spirit which burst forth in '98."⁸⁵

Despite the debacle of the July rising, Irish southerners did not give up hope for violent overthrow of British rule. Irish Memphians, for example, had not heard about the defeat in Ireland and continued to fight the "obstinate and determined refusal of the British government, to grant to Irish men the right that belongs to every people; that of self determination." Britain, they believed, was the source of all the "evils and sufferings

under which she [Ireland] has groaned." This reality necessitated that "every freeman and lover of liberty throughout the Union . . . aid and secure unhappy Ireland in this her final desperate struggle for national independence." They resolved to collect money for this "struggle" with generous opening contributions from prominent Irish Memphians, including Eugene Magevney, to send to Ireland via the New York Friends of Ireland Committee.⁸⁶

Even when the disastrous news reached the South, the Irish Memphians held on to their romantic dreams of Irish freedom. The Memphis Friends of Ireland agreed that money collected for the failed revolution should "be held as a perpetual accumulating fund for the benefit of Ireland, until the same be rendered available for the establishment of their liberty."⁸⁷ Irish southerners followed the trials of the Young Irelanders and welcomed them to the South when they escaped from prison in Ireland and Australia. Leading rebels Thomas Francis Meagher, John Mitchel, and William Smith O'Brien all visited the South to speak and to receive the hospitality of Irish southerners such as Louisiana sugar planter Maunsel White.⁸⁸

A few Young Irelanders were so enamored with the South that they settled there. Richard D'Alton Williams came to Spring Hill College, just outside Mobile, two years after an Irish jury acquitted him of treason in 1849. A colleague of Mitchel, he taught Latin and Greek at the Jesuit College before moving to Louisiana to practice medicine and write poetry.⁸⁹ Joseph Brennan settled in Louisiana, where a New Orleans newspaper compared his "eloquence" to that of the 1798 exiles.⁹⁰ After his escape from imprisonment in Tasmania, John Mitchel went to New York and founded *The Citizen* to propagate his virulent Irish nationalism. Mitchel mercilessly attacked the British government and its Irish collaborators. The "violence of his hatred" toward England "distinguished" him from his peers. Mitchel eventually came south to avoid, as he described it, the "blatherskite" of New York.⁹¹

After migrating south, Mitchel left the mainstream of Irish American politics, but he did not desert political activism altogether. On the contrary, he reestablished his newspaper as the *Southern Citizen* in Knoxville, Tennessee. As the title suggests, Mitchel's new organ had a strong pro-southern bent. The paper was primarily "a *Southern* journal," but Mitchel believed it could be "properly termed an Irish American paper" too, because it would "continue to supply an epitome of Irish intelligence illustrative of the condition of that island." This "intelligence" usually contained a healthy dose of Mitchel's contempt for Britain and its "genocidal" treatment of Ireland.⁹²

Although Irish people throughout America read the *Southern Citizen*, it

remained the voice of Irish southerners, with agents selling it in every southern town that had a large Irish populace. The New Orleans newspapers promoted it, and prominent Irish businessmen in the South, such as John Dooly of Richmond, ran advertisements in it.⁹³ Even Irish men in more remote parts of the region, who could not purchase it easily, received it from Irish friends.⁹⁴

Undoubtedly, Mitchel's opinion found fertile ground among Irish southerners like John Kerr, who saw Irish landlords as "greedy *cowardly tyrants*." He criticized his fellow countrymen for not supporting Mitchel and "a sound revolution," which was necessary to destroy "the relation between the landlord and the tenant."⁹⁵ Protestant and Catholic alike shared Mitchel's views. Railroad worker P. Kennedy wrote that he had seen many Irish men "on bended knee with uplifted hands calling the curse of God on Irish landlords and the British Government who have driven them from their homes."⁹⁶ Robert McElderry praised *The Citizen* to his cousins in Ireland and defended Mitchel's "intense hatred of the English government," because McElderry believed hatred was "a feeling which ought to pervade the breast of every Irishman." This loathing was justified because the British government despised "Ireland and the Irish with a perfect hatred." McElderry lamented the divisions between Catholics and Protestants that kept the Irish as "abject slaves."⁹⁷

Large numbers of Irish southerners, however, were not as pessimistic as McElderry. They warmly endorsed Young Ireland's successor organization — the Fenian Brotherhood.⁹⁸ Founded on St. Patrick's Day 1858, the Irish Republican (Fenian) Brotherhood sought to free Ireland by violent means. Its leader, James Stephens, was frustrated by the "bunkum and fulsome filibustering" caused by the "oratory of the Young Irelanders" in America, which was full of "pompous phrases" and "gilded harangues" made "over beakers of fizzling champagne."⁹⁹

Despite his frustration, Stephens realized the vital importance of Irish American support for his new organization. He worked tirelessly to form Fenian "circles" throughout the United States, Ireland, and Great Britain.¹⁰⁰ The outbreak of the Civil War did not halt Fenian efforts. In 1864, Stephens visited the 171-member Nashville circle and found "some of them excellent and the vast majority average." Stephens was more impressed with the Memphis circle.¹⁰¹

After the war, circles in Savannah, Charleston, Alexandria, and Portsmouth sold Fenian bonds to support the coming revolt in Ireland as well as a plan to invade British Canada. A Major Tuohy, "traveling the South," sold \$3,000 worth of the bonds.¹⁰² Patrick Condon of New Orleans did monumental work organizing Fenians in that city as well as in Alabama and Texas, where he initiated circles in Mobile, Montgomery, Browns-

ville, and Brazos Santiago. There were seven circles in the New Orleans area, consisting of nearly 800 members. The largest of these was the Emmett Circle with 250 members, which naturally was based in the heart of Irish New Orleans — the uptown third ward.¹⁰³

Condon found it difficult to sell bonds because the recent memory of worthless Confederate States of America bonds put “a damper” on the whole concept. Despite this fear and post-Civil War economic hardship, Irish New Orleanians contributed generously to the cause, and the city’s Fenian officers were ready to support a Canadian invasion.¹⁰⁴ One prominent Irishman in North Carolina, however, opposed the Fenians. Edward Conigland poked fun at the bravado of the highly structured Fenians. He wrote: “How thankful the Irish people must be to have a Republic ready-made to their land!” In a more serious tone, he objected to the officers of a “future Republic” getting paid “*in present* from the fund contributed by the humble, generous, confiding, and industrious Irish men scattered throughout the land.”¹⁰⁵

The southern Irish hero John Mitchel also was lukewarm toward the Fenians. At first he declined to participate “in the Fenian movement as at present organized or rather disorganized.” He thought insurrection in Ireland futile, especially while England was at peace.¹⁰⁶ Mitchel eventually accepted a position from the Fenians in Paris, France, but continued to criticize the leadership, particularly Stephens, for leaving “good Irish men . . . in many a prison.”¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, Mitchel’s qualified endorsement of Fenianism was enough for the southern Irish. Activist Condon found it helpful in attracting members, and one group of Irish New Orleanians named their circle in his honor.¹⁰⁸ The Fenians in New Orleans were numerous enough to frighten the British Consul there. Worried about the Fenians’ efforts on behalf of a plan to invade Canada, he asked the local army commander to suppress them. Perplexed by the request, the commander, Irish American and Civil War hero Major General Phil Sheridan, sought the War Department’s advice. It advised Sheridan to arrest any Fenian agitators who breached the neutrality laws of the United States.¹⁰⁹ The British Consul need not have worried. The Fenian “invasions” of Canada were spectacular failures, as was an Irish uprising in 1867. Plagued by procrastination, internal bickering, and British spies, the Fenian Brotherhood did not live up to its potential in the 1860s.¹¹⁰

The South’s Fenian branches suffered their own share of these problems. The great New Orleans organizer, Patrick Condon, turned out to be one Godfrey Massey — a British informant.¹¹¹ One Irish New Orleanian had always been suspicious of “Condon.” “A Southern Fenian” wrote to James Stephens and told him how Condon just “appeared” in

New Orleans and had lied about his service in a Confederate States Army regiment from Virginia. A Captain Burk of the Emmet Circle had warned John O'Mahony about "Condon," but the "reply of Mr. O'Mahony was a gross insult to Capt. B. and the brotherhood of New Orleans." The insulting answer made Burk's fellow Fenians think that O'Mahony "was either drunk or crazy." The writer hoped Stephens would take a different opinion and investigate "Condon," as he was "a dangerous fellow."¹¹²

The Texas Fenians did not worry about traitors; instead, lack of organization was their biggest concern. While remaining loyal to Stephens, they wanted to postpone any attack on Ireland until "England was involved with some foreign power or in domestic revolution." Particularly worried by the lack of communication from headquarters, the Irish in the Lone Star State needed "something tangible to stimulate them."¹¹³

By 1874, the American Fenian records were in "delightful disarray."¹¹⁴ The support and dreams of Irish southerners for the Fenians proved as misplaced as their patronage of Young Ireland. Although their interest in Irish politics never again reached the pitch of Fenian fever, they did not give up hope or forget their heroes. Groups like the Mitchel Rifles of New Orleans saw to that.¹¹⁵ They kept the flame of Irish nationalism alive for the Fenian Brotherhood's successor organization in America, *Clan na Gael*, or United Brotherhood, to make inroads in the South. In 1879, a Captain M. Coony's "promptness and efficiency" in organizing the New Orleans branch impressed its chief organizer, former Fenian John Devoy.¹¹⁶ *Clan na Gael* also could boast over 500 members "in good standing" in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and the Carolinas.¹¹⁷

Irish southerners' continuous involvement in their societies, militias, and Fenian circles did more than nurture a nostalgia for loved ones and Ireland. These various associations gave them a role in the South beyond digging ditches, plastering houses, or selling dry goods. They could be "joiners" just like their native neighbors. Regional differences could be buried under the banner of a common Irishness.¹¹⁸ Their parades, fundraisers, and celebrations made them proud of their Irishness, while firmly placing it in a southern context. Pledges to Ireland on St. Patrick's Day were matched by vigorous toasts to American heroes, southern politicians, and the South. The Irish in the South contrasted the plight of Ireland with the abundance and greatness of America and the South. When Daniel O'Connell disagreed with the South's "peculiar institution," southern Repeal associations distanced themselves from him.¹¹⁹ Consequently, rather than isolating Irish southerners, their support of family, community, and Irish associations gave them the confidence to begin their integration into southern society.

CHAPTER FIVE

KEEPING THE FAITH

Faith in God also helped Irish immigrants adapt to life in the South. Along with family, friends, and contact with home, churches provided comfort for all new migrants, both Catholic and Protestant. Church attendance cut across class lines and reinforced ethnic awareness. Irish men and women used religious services as a connection with home, something familiar in a strange land. They believed it necessary to make sacrifices for the preservation of that key element of their ethnicity. Irish Protestants found well-organized vibrant churches in the South, whereas Irish Catholics, with the aid of Irish priests, bishops, and nuns, had to struggle to keep the strong faith they brought with them from Ireland. They entered a region dominated religiously by evangelical Protestants, who were suspicious of Catholicism. Irish immigrants' need for the spiritual aid and ethnic security of their Catholicism could have hindered seriously their integration into southern society. The Irish found this difficult struggle to keep their national faith much preferable to facing the handicaps associated with being a Catholic in Ireland. Southerners did not exclude Catholics from the political process or force them to pay tithes to an established church, and the Irish appreciated that major difference. They were not going to let their church seem incompatible with American and southern values. The sheer numbers of the Irish and their devotion to the faith gave southern Catholicism a decidedly Irish tinge, but running the church helped transform these immigrants into loyal Americans and southerners.¹ As a result, they helped convert a seemingly foreign institution into one that the Protestant majority could respect as part of mainstream southern society.

Irish influence on southern religion began with the great Scots Irish migration of the eighteenth century. The Ulster migrants brought their Presbyterian faith with them and founded some of the South's earliest presbyteries.² They also created some of the southern backcountry's academies that produced a generation of southern leaders, including future president Andrew Jackson and future southern spokesman John C.

Calhoun. Many Scots Irish in the South embraced the Great Awakening in the 1740s and 1750s. This outburst of religious fervor in the southern backcountry sparked the spectacular growth of Dissenter churches and “transformed” the South into a pluralistic Protestant society.³

Thus, Irish Protestants coming to the South recognized some similarities between the region and their native home. Presbyterian migrant John Knox, a popular Sunday school teacher at the First Presbyterian Church in his native Armagh, felt uneasy about leaving his home in Ireland, lamenting that he would not see his Christian brethren until they met again “in that happy place where parting with friends and all sighing and sorrow shall be forever unknown.”⁴ Bound for South Carolina, Knox must have felt some comfort from the fact that in the year of his arrival there were 136 Presbyterian churches in that state. If he decided to move inland to Georgia, Alabama, or Mississippi, he could easily find a church to his liking.⁵ Irish Protestants had many choices in the South. For example, Presbyterian Robert McElderry sampled the Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Catholic churches in Lynchburg, Virginia.⁶

Many nineteenth-century Ulster immigrants, however, stayed loyal to their Presbyterian heritage. The Ulster settlers of Staggers Point, Texas, for example, retained their faith with the aid of Irish ministers throughout the region despite the trials and tribulations of migrating across the South and settling on the western frontier. William Weir came to Natchez from Dromore presbytery in his native County Down to devote “his labor and talents to the propagation of the Gospel.” From Natchez, he ventured north to work among the isolated believers in the “upper country.”⁷ Minister Alexander Wilson of Oak Hill, North Carolina, led a more comfortable life, but he had other difficulties. At the 1835 Presbyterian General Assembly, he became exasperated when delegates divided over “political” issues and displayed very little “of the spirit of Christ.”⁸ In Charleston, the Reverend Thomas Smyth of Second Presbyterian Church labored against “the clamor for popular effusions and sensational preaching” and “bigoted and exclusive views.”⁹

In spite of occasional outbursts of bigotry and incivility, Irish Protestants in the South fared much better than their Catholic countrymen. In 1815 the Archdiocese of Baltimore held jurisdiction over most of the South, but the sheer size of this area discouraged organization beyond Maryland. The Gulf Coast had seen a strong Catholic presence when the French and Spanish controlled it. As an arm of the state, the church in Louisiana and West Florida received regular government support, including Irish priests from European seminaries.¹⁰ The American takeover of these areas between 1798 and 1821, however, ushered in a period of serious decline. In Natchez, once a bastion of Catholicism during

Spanish rule, the local church depended on an occasional visiting priest from New Orleans for administration of the sacraments. In New Orleans, the Creole laity took control of church property and affairs.¹¹

In the rest of the country, too, the laity took control of their affairs. Without clerical help or influence, lay trustees, many of whom were Irish, by 1820 had organized Catholic communities, built churches, and petitioned Rome for priests and bishops. To the dismay of Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal of Baltimore, Irish and American lay trustees demanded a greater voice in the church's affairs. In cities from New York to South Carolina, they attempted to control clerical appointments.¹²

In the South, Norfolk's and Charleston's trustees, dominated by Irish immigrants, particularly opposed Maréchal's episcopal power. They resented what they saw as the domineering French influence on the American church. Because of the French Revolution and resulting persecution of the pro-monarchy French church, many French priests had removed to the United States, providing a boon to the underdeveloped church and forming its clerical backbone during the early years of the Republic. Irish immigrants, however, disliked the French priests and preferred English-speaking clerics. As many of these early Irish in the South were 1798 refugees, they did not have much sympathy for French clerics reared in the traditions of French absolutism. They preferred a church that would be much more compatible with American republican values. Upset at their French archbishop's appointments, they tried to escape his interference by lobbying Rome for the creation of new sees in Virginia and South Carolina.¹³

Exasperated by the insolent seizure of clerical power, Maréchal complained of the Irish influence on the American church and tried to replace priests appointed by trustees with his own choices. Contrary to canon law, the Norfolk and Charleston trustees refused to accept Maréchal's authority. They boldly went over his head to the pope. The controversy escalated when the Norfolk trustees appealed to civil authorities and even to former president Thomas Jefferson for aid against the "totalitarian" designs of the French archbishop.¹⁴ This call for government interference in church affairs shocked many Catholics, even Irish priests. One visiting Irish cleric wrote dejectedly that his fellow priests had created "dreadful havoc amongst the Irish." The anti-French diatribes had roused the Irish "into a frenzy of national spirit and Irish pride" and done immense damage to the church in America.¹⁵

Because he was under the sway of Irish clerics in Rome, Pope Pius VII set up new dioceses at Richmond and Charleston in 1820 and appointed Irish bishops to the new sees. When Archbishop Maréchal visited Rome in 1821, however, and informed the pontiff of the rampant trustee dis-

obedience in America, the pope responded with a letter reinforcing episcopal authority. The letter, addressed to Maréchal and the other American bishops, advised them to pick only “upright and honest men as trustees” and make sure that church property and clerical appointments remained under episcopal control. In an official sense, the pope settled the damaging controversy, because Irish southerners, while retaining their preference for Irish clerics, accepted his decision. When the next major controversy between a French bishop and trustees erupted during the 1840s, the Irish were a bastion for episcopal authority.¹⁶

This new Irish respect for bishops grew in large part because of the leadership of Bishop John England of Charleston. One of the few positive outcomes of the trustee controversy, the Irish-born and -educated England in his tenure as the first bishop of the Carolinas and Georgia had a profound effect on the southern church. A tireless organizer, England founded churches, a seminary, and America’s first Catholic newspaper, the *United States Catholic Miscellany*. His zeal for keeping the faith alive in everyone from immigrants to planters took him all over the country. For example, after Spain ceded East Florida to the United States, he visited it regularly, not wanting the faith to die in this newly acquired American territory.¹⁷

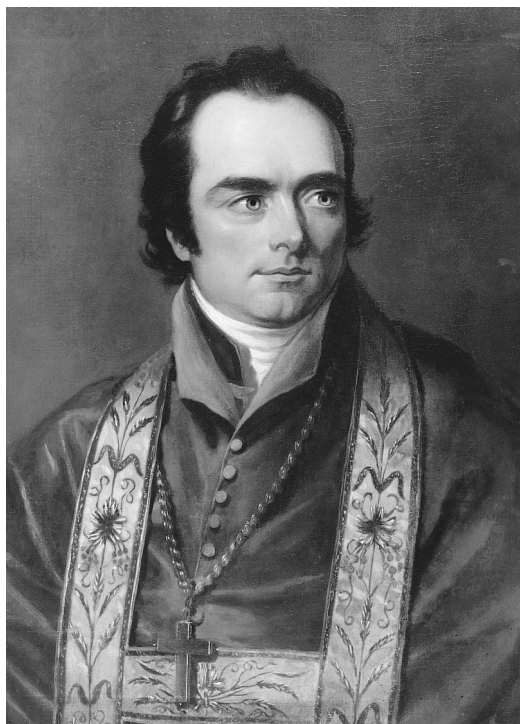
England’s intellectual efforts exceeded even his prodigious physical ones. Through articles in his *United States Catholic Miscellany*, he stoutly defended the compatibility of Roman Catholicism with American republicanism. This was theological music to the ears of the Irish trustees. Since colonial times, many Americans had distrusted the autocratic and hierarchical nature of Catholicism, and the arrival of large numbers of Irish and German Catholics only exacerbated those fears. England answered each attack against Catholicism by pointing out the consistent loyalty of Catholic Americans, both native and naturalized, to the United States. A strong supporter of the First Amendment, which appeared on the masthead of the *Miscellany*, he argued that the strict separation of church and state made Catholic allegiance to spiritual and civil authority easy. This division, along with the universal nature of Catholicism, which had believers living under various forms of government throughout the “civilized world,” made its bishops realize that “no special form of human government for civil concerns has been generally established by divine authority.” Thus, Catholics, England believed, had to be loyal to “legitimate” governments, including republics, or else face “damnation” for opposing peace and order.¹⁸

This cleric from County Cork was “Americanizing” the Catholic Church. Unlike many of his colleagues who had fled the French Revolution, he embraced democracy and republicanism. He undoubtedly was

influenced by his coming of age in an Ireland “under the shade of social disabilities, civil oppression, and religious persecution,” and accordingly his view of America and the South was very positive.¹⁹ In Charleston, he and his growing flock enjoyed liberties that Catholics in Ireland could only dream about. A close friend of his recorded that his greatest wish was to achieve “what might be called the ‘naturalization’ of Catholicity. He desired that it should no longer be regarded as the religion of the stranger.” On the contrary, he wanted it to be “American in principle, feeling, and habit.”²⁰ England’s espousal of the American political system’s greatness while still maintaining a devout Catholicism and Irish identity affected his fellow Irish immigrants. They as clerics, religious, and laity embraced his vision and spread it throughout the South.

Although quick to defend the church, England initially recognized its weaknesses. He acknowledged that Irish priests occasionally used America as a refuge from scandal back home rather than as an opportunity to spread the Gospel and aid the faithful. Because of the immense demand in America for priests, an Irish cleric who had broken his vow of chastity or had disobeyed a bishop in his native diocese could continue administering the sacraments in the United States. Thus, many priests in Ireland saw America as a place of banishment and not as a missionary area in need of their assistance. England believed, though, that with a solid education on his ideas about America any foreign priest could be an immense help to the church in his diocese. Naturalized in 1826, England led the way by celebrating his new nationality. He expressed admiration for American heroes like George Washington, calling him the “genius” of American government. He highlighted his belief in the greatness of American institutions by creating a form of church government based on republican ideology. In addition, he defended southern slavery against the “mischief” created by interfering abolitionists. He particularly passed this pro-American, and prosouthern, emphasis on to young priests in his Charleston seminary.²¹

This southern bishop did not, however, forget his roots. Beginning some speeches in Gaelic, he enjoyed expounding on the ancient glories of Ireland and how the English had destroyed them. Irish commentators appreciated his support for Daniel O’Connell and Catholic Emancipation. He often wrote to his friend O’Connell to give him advice. On one occasion England told the *Liberator*, “I will not yield to you in love of Ireland,” and gently scolded him for his support for disfranchising the “forty-shilling freeholder” in return for Catholic Emancipation. As a former forty-shilling voter himself and a keen supporter of American democracy, England was a strong advocate of expanding, not decreasing, the Irish electorate.²² The Irish in the South were upset at his death in



Bishop John England, early
1820s (Courtesy of the
Diocese of Charleston
Archives)

1842. The Charleston Hibernian Society, of which he was an honorary member, lamented and eulogized him “as a citizen of the United States” and added that “there never breathed one more fervent in his admiration of the institutions he had sworn to protect.”

Natives had to admit that “Bishop England, although but an adopted citizen, loved our Union and our Sunny South with truly filial affection . . . his way was always felt on the side of social order and good government.”²³ He was ahead of his time, and his zealous defense of the faith, strong support for lay involvement in parish administration, and successful amalgamation of Catholicism, Irish America, and the South provided a blueprint for others. The most important bishop in the Old South, England was also one of the most important in the United States.

Many Irish priests who were educated at the Charleston seminary and whom England had ordained followed in his footsteps. Clerics such as Fathers John Barry, Patrick Lynch, and Andrew Byrne are among the best examples of England’s influence. They continued his work of building the church while simultaneously integrating it into southern society. Barry, a native of County Wexford, entered the Charleston seminary and was ordained by England in 1825. Initially appointed as pastor in Au-

gusta, Georgia, he eventually became “known to every man, woman, and child” in the diocese “either personally or by his reputation.” Because Barry was a good troubleshooter, England and his episcopal successors sent him to numerous parishes and missions to solve problems and conflicts. After Rome separated Georgia from the Diocese of Charleston and formed a new see at Savannah in 1850, Barry continued his good work for Savannah’s first bishop, fellow Irishman Francis Gartland. On Gartland’s premature death, Barry became bishop, but his “labors, sufficient to occupy the time of a dozen priests,” had taken their toll. In 1859, just two years after his consecration, he died while recuperating in France from an illness caused by exhaustion.²⁴

Patrick N. Lynch did not have Barry’s pastoral reputation, but he made up for this deficiency through his continuation of England’s zealous defense of Catholicism and its compatibility with American republicanism. England had recognized Lynch’s potential and sent the young priest to Rome to earn his doctor of divinity degree. After his mentor’s death, Lynch became editor of the *Miscellany* and carried on the paper’s tradition of responding to any attack on the faith. Worried about the “evil” of “mixed marriages,” Lynch wanted Protestants who married Catholics to take a “formal oath” to rear their children in the Catholic faith.²⁵ Despite this sectarianism, Lynch saw himself as an American and a republican. He continued to defend its compatibility with the American political system. He also retained the old Irish and American distrust of the anti-republican “royalist” French. For example, in 1859 he recommended one devout Catholic named Pellicier, who visited Baltimore, to a fellow bishop as “a good American” despite “his French name.”²⁶ Lynch became Charleston’s third bishop in 1858, and he later led South Carolina’s Catholics through the challenges of secession and civil war as an ardent Confederate, thereby proving the affinity between Catholics and southern republican ideals.

Thanks to his protégés, Bishop England’s zeal for the faith and belief in the United States extended beyond his diocese. Andrew Byrne, a native of County Meath, became England’s first American priest in 1824. Honing his missionary skills in the sparsely Catholic North Carolina, Byrne faced an enormous challenge in 1844, when he was appointed to the new see at Little Rock, Arkansas. His new post encompassed the state of Arkansas and the Indian nations in Oklahoma. With the aid of a single priest, he set out to establish the faith in this frontier area of the United States. Inspired by his episcopal mentor, Byrne approached the task with enthusiasm.²⁷ After a year in Arkansas, Byrne purchased property for a church in Little Rock, but he complained that the Catholic population “[did] not exceed seven hundred” and they were “scattered in every

county in the state.” Strapped for funds, Byrne traveled throughout Europe and America raising money and recruiting clerics.²⁸

After the American annexation of Texas in 1845, Byrne worried that a number of his “best people” were leaving for the Lone Star State and that “not one family [is] coming to this state.” He sought to solve this problem by replacing his Texas-bound parishioners with famine refugees from Ireland. While traveling in Ireland to recruit priests and nuns, Byrne, with the help of local priest Father Thomas Hore, enlisted 400 families from Counties Wicklow and Wexford to immigrate to Arkansas. Byrne met them and Hore in Liverpool before they embarked for New Orleans, but he was not in Little Rock when they arrived. Byrne had not informed anyone of the immigrants’ impending arrival, and his trusted assistant in Arkansas had died while Byrne was in Europe. Thus, the small Catholic community in Arkansas’s capital had not prepared for the arrival of the Irish. Having already left members of the party in Liverpool, New Orleans, and Texas, and reduced to sleeping in church pews, Hore’s group split again, the majority going to St. Louis. Apart from the fact that a few families settled in Fort Smith, Bishop Byrne’s ambitious plan failed.²⁹

Despite this disappointment, the bishop stayed at his task. He brought priests and nuns from Ireland to the diocese, and by the mid-1850s he had helped establish relatively strong Catholic parishes in Helena, Little Rock, and Fort Smith. Unfortunately, the long distances between these communities taxed Byrne’s energy. He endured hundreds of miles in the saddle, an occasional fall from his horse, and illness in order to cater to his flock. Whenever he felt tired and desperate, he told himself that “God would provide.”³⁰ Exhausted from his work, he died in 1862, revered as “one of the most laborious bishops in our hierarchy.”³¹

Although not as “laborious” as Byrne, other Irish priests similarly kept the faith alive throughout the South. Father M. D. O’Reily left the settled Catholic community in Locust Grove for the newly formed Mississippi diocese of Natchez. Based in Vicksburg, O’Reily helped found the city’s first Catholic church and traveled throughout central Mississippi to provide the sacraments to the faithful. On one occasion, a drought and the “accursed red hills” of Mississippi kept him out of action for three weeks. The “clouds of dust” which came from “every point of the compass” affected his respiratory system and confined him to Vicksburg.³² Priests who had not been directly under Bishop England’s rule also exemplified some of his missionary qualities. Father Peter McLaughlin overcame illness to minister to the Irish levee workers around Baton Rouge.³³ In Jackson, Louisiana, Father George McMahon suffered “a severe attack of fever” that “prostrated” him for two weeks; a local doctor blamed it on “overexertion.”³⁴ In 1853, Father Bernard O’Reilly came to Corpus

Christi, Texas, and found just nineteen Catholic families and no church. Through “zealous” fund-raising throughout the state, he managed to purchase a lot and construct the city’s first Catholic church. The local newspaper reported that the church’s completion was “mainly due to the enterprising and gifted pastor, Father O’Reilly.”³⁵

In overall numbers Irish and Irish American priests were particularly important in the south Atlantic states. For example, in the Diocese of Charleston, between 1820 and 1880, 71 of the 101 priests who served there were Irish or of Irish heritage. Undoubtedly, Bishops England and Lynch promoted their number. Similarly, after its erection in 1850, the Diocese of Savannah had an overwhelmingly Irish clergy. Farther west in the dioceses encompassing the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, the majority of priests were French or Creole. Southern bishops, whatever their nativity, however, made intense efforts to recruit Irish priests for their dioceses. Thus, the number of Irish priests grew through the antebellum period, and the Diocese of Mobile gained an important Irish influence in 1859 when County Cork native John Quinlan became its bishop. The American hierarchy agreed that Mobile needed an Irish bishop because of the large Irish presence in the city. In the Archdiocese of New Orleans, for example, there was one Irish priest serving a parish in 1835. By 1855 that number had risen to nine and by 1875 to sixteen.³⁶

Virtually all of the Irish priests who served in New Orleans avoided the hardships of traveling in the backcountry, but they faced unique urban difficulties. One Irish resident of New Orleans wrote home in shock that “there is no Sunday here.” He acknowledged that “the churches are open but so are the *circuses*, the *theaters*[,] the cockpits [and] the gaming houses.” Business, too, thrived on Sundays because “more was bought and sold” on the Sabbath “than any other day.”³⁷ Every other day of the week, Irish priests faced the violence, poverty, and alcohol abuse that were common among their burgeoning urban immigrant flocks.

Father Adam Kindelon, the first pastor of the “Irish” uptown St. Patrick’s parish, had to minister to a community recovering from the 1832 cholera epidemic. He founded a Catholic boys’ orphan asylum to help the numerous orphans created by the epidemic. Faced with extremely difficult circumstances, Kindelon resigned from St. Patrick’s two years later to give full attention to his orphanage. Bishop Blanc replaced him with another Irish priest, Father Ignatius James Mullon, who kept the position until his death in 1866. “Big, forcible, outspoken, [and] rough,” this Irish priest became a hero to the uptown Irish. He helped construct a large Gothic church and founded a girls’ orphan asylum and a temperance society. He harangued his congregation for donations to the church and also gained tidy sums from administering St. Patrick’s cemetery.³⁸

In Savannah, the Reverend Jeremiah O'Neill Sr. performed similar tasks. As John England's lieutenant in Georgia, he labored in the city when it was just a mission of Charleston. To deal with the burgeoning Irish presence in the city he recruited some Irish sisters from Charleston to found a house in Savannah in 1845. When the famine Irish arrived, he rebuilt the church in Savannah and helped organize an orphan asylum. Money was always scarce, and O'Neill noted that morale was often low among his fellow clergy. Nevertheless, after Savannah became a diocese, O'Neill "without regret" turned his parish over to the new bishop "without scandal [or] a debt." He did not retire, however. He continued to work among Irish Savannahians through yellow fever epidemics, labor disputes, and the Civil War. After he died, his parishioners buried him alongside people "whom he baptized in infancy, consoled in trials, and reconciled to heaven during life."³⁹

Priests like Mullan and O'Neill did not work alone. They received a large amount of aid from nuns, many of whom also were Irish. Diocesan leaders realized immediately the value of sisters to their dioceses, and southern bishops constantly tried to recruit religious women directly from Ireland. Bishop England set up his own order of sisters in Charleston to help the growing immigrant population in his diocese. Mostly recruited in Ireland by England himself, these Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy eventually spread to other parts of South Carolina and Georgia, bringing much-needed education and health care to the immigrant Irish and also to natives in distress.⁴⁰ Bishop Byrne brought Irish Sisters of Mercy to Little Rock to organize a school. Galveston's first bishop, French-born Jean Marie Odin, tried to bring Irish Ursulines and Dominicans to his frontier diocese.⁴¹ In New Orleans and Mobile, Irish sisters staffed the orphanages, schools, and hospitals.⁴² The various sisters had "responsibilities that few other women" in the South had. In a foreign environment, Irish nuns had to supervise the building of hospitals, schools, and orphanages and to keep them open on slim budgets. They took care of the sick and the infirm, often providing the only comfort for victims of yellow fever. Despite these many hardships, however, they usually found "through God's grace . . . true happiness" in their vocation. They also eased some of the suspicions natives had of Catholics in general and the Irish in particular. Their "useful" work during various health-care crises in southern cities made them a valuable part of urban society. Natives also welcomed their education of Catholic children, which gave the young children of immigrants greater potential for economic success and integration into southern society.⁴³

Excluded from the church's power structure, nuns often buried their egos to concentrate on service. Priests were far more likely than nuns to



Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, 1880s, Savannah, Georgia. Standing, left to right: Sr. Athanasius Joyce, Sr. Borgia Thomas, Sr. Teresa Joseph Brogan, Sr. Leo O'Kane. Seated, left to right: Sr. Mary of the Sacred Heart Burch, Sr. Rose Mahon, Sr. Gabriel Delybergoote, Sr. Euphemia Monaghan. (Archives of St. Vincent's Academy, Savannah, Ga.)

lose sight of their calling, get involved in bitter squabbles, neglect their duties, and hinder the church's growth in and integration into the South. Father O'Reily of Vicksburg waged a battle through that city's newspapers against a wayward parishioner who disliked the Irish priest's attempts to purchase a lot for a new church. The parishioner, an American-born Catholic convert, made his disagreements with O'Reily public. Rather than approaching the convert quietly, O'Reily responded with his own series of diatribes in the newspapers.⁴⁴ In New Orleans, Father Mullon went behind fellow clerics' backs to complain of their defiance and lack of "sacramental spirit." One Irish parishioner complained of Mullon's "outrageous and high-handed conduct" and "malicious" lies. Apparently, Mullon demanded immediate payment for a pew at St. Patrick's, and despite the parishioner's position as one of St. Patrick's "earliest supporters," when he did not pay fast enough Mullon rented the pew to another Catholic.⁴⁵ One Irish parishioner in Jackson, Louisiana, charged Father McMahon with a more serious offense. He claimed that the pastor was living with an "old lady" in a "shanty" on the edge of town. Rumors implied that a "young Scotch lady" brought McMahon "whiskey and worthless novels to read." The parishioner feared that McMahon's antics might bring disgrace upon the Jackson congregation.⁴⁶

Despite backbiting and occasional scandals, Irish clergy in the South created strong Catholic parishes that helped Irish immigrants adapt. In

Ireland the local parish had been very important to the Catholic Irish. It fulfilled spiritual and social needs during arduous times. In the 1840s, Ireland went through “a devotional revolution.” Between 1823 and 1845, the Irish developed a new pride in Catholicism from their involvement in Daniel O’Connell’s Catholic Association and Father Mathew’s temperance crusade.⁴⁷ The apocalypticlike disaster of the famine pushed even more Irish people close to the church. One Irish priest described the outburst of religious fervor as an “extraordinary movement” and lamented that “we have not . . . priests for the wants of the Mission.”⁴⁸ Another observer wrote that the Irish were “very good, but much neglected in every way by both the civil and ecclesiastical government, more by the latter than the former.”⁴⁹ Forced into action by the laity, Paul Cullen, archbishop of Armagh and later of the more powerful Archdiocese of Dublin, harnessed the evangelical energy in the country to reorganize the church. During his tenure from 1849 to 1878, he converted the Irish church into a model of Roman efficiency with numerous churches, strong parishes, and many vocations to serve the needs of a devout and obedient flock.⁵⁰ Similarly, when facing new difficult circumstances in America, the Irish immigrants transformed their parishes into the most important institutions in the American church.

The Irish in the South brought their devotion with them and sought the comfort of the church and parish life. Even when they had not experienced Cullen’s reforms in Ireland, they provided similar raw material for zealous clerics in America.⁵¹ Dublin native Francis Gartland, bishop of Savannah, noted that “vast numbers of the children of poor immigrants from Ireland had fallen away from the faith,” but this lapse occurred because “through dire necessity [they] often located themselves in Districts where there was no church and no priest at hand.” He realized that the Irish had not abandoned the faith but that the church had abandoned them. Thus, the poorer Irish immigrants may have been ignorant of dogma, but in search of spiritual solace, they were ready to learn it.⁵²

Bishop Gartland was partially right. The Irish, when church facilities were available, embraced them, but they also applied themselves to construct them where none existed. Irish men, for example, dominated a group of Catholic petitioners requesting a resident pastor from Bishop Blanc of New Orleans in 1839. In remote Shreveport, Louisiana, Irish Catholics joined with their French brethren in requesting that one Father Canavan, “who [had] assisted us all he could,” be appointed to their city. If Blanc granted their request, they promised to build a “house of worship” for their new priest.⁵³ Druggist P. H. McGraw represented Natchez Catholics in their attempts to get a bishop to come to their recently created see. As spokesman for the Natchez trustees, McGraw

conveyed their resolution that all Catholic property under their control would “be transferred to the first Bishop of Natchez and his successors,” on condition the bishop made “Natchez [his] permanent residence, for the purpose of erecting a Roman Catholic Church suitable to the wants of that society in this city and its vicinity.”⁵⁴

Realizing that the church used most of its scarce resources on the burgeoning Irish Catholic population in the towns and cities, the Irish in the rural South often took matters into their own hands. In Beaufort, South Carolina, Michael O’Connor, “a respectable mechanic,” kept his faith despite marrying a devout Baptist. When she went to church on Sunday, “he retired to his chamber, shut the door, [and] spent the forenoon in his private devotions.” His wife eventually converted to Catholicism, and the O’Connors became the earliest supporters of the Beaufort mission.⁵⁵ In the Barnwell District of rural South Carolina the seven vestrymen leading the effort to construct the Church of St. James the Greater were all Irish. The Irish settlers at Sulphur Springs and Paulding, Mississippi, also went beyond worshiping in the privacy of their own homes. In 1843 St. Michael’s Church in Paulding became the second Catholic church in the state. By 1858, this Irish parish had a resident pastor who visited smaller Catholic communities throughout the eastern part of the state. The Sulphur Springs community constructed their church for \$1,300 in 1847. Originally erecting it in nearby Camden, Leake County, they moved it closer to their settlement three years later at a cost of \$379.75. Five years later, they collected \$1,595 for a Catholic school. In 1858, Bishop William Henry Elder wrote to a member of the congregation to congratulate him and his Catholic neighbors for their efforts on behalf of the faith.⁵⁶ Thus, the isolated Irish immigrant’s devotion could impress even the most fatigued of traveling priests. In 1825, Father Joseph Stokes was so moved by the Catholics of the Laurens District in South Carolina, he contrasted the “pious demeanour of these back-woods people” with the less pious “conduct of too many of our Catholics living in large cities.”⁵⁷ Father Stokes’s opinion of the urban Catholics in the South may have been colored by the very recent contentious trustee controversy in Charleston, but his impression of the rural immigrants shows that even in the most isolated of circumstances the Irish could remain devoted to their faith.

Transient Irish laborers on southern railroads and levees did not have a ready-made organization or the time to set up their own churches; therefore, their plight worried many clerics. Transients did, however, express some interest in their faith. For example, the sparse Catholic residents of “Pilatka” in north Florida were delighted when the “poor laborers” working on the nearby “Florida Railroad” generously contrib-

uted to their church construction fund. Father Peter McLaughlin believed that a strong mission for the Irish ditchers on Louisiana plantations would help save them from the “grog shops.”⁵⁸ Bishop Elder of Natchez felt concern for the numerous Irish workers in his state. On his annual circuits of Mississippi, he administered the sacraments to isolated Irish workers. In Holly Springs, along the Mississippi Central Railroad, he was happy to find that a Dominican priest from Memphis regularly visited the Catholics there. He remained particularly worried, however, about the Irish levee workers in the Yazoo River area and sent priests to labor camps along the river and its tributaries.⁵⁹ According to one visiting priest, Elder’s fears were justified. Father Jean Guillou wrote that the Irish near Yazoo City were “losing themselves through the abuse of alcohol” and neglecting their Catholic duties. As for himself, Guillou longed for a “retreat” away from his poor mission to recuperate both physically and spiritually.⁶⁰

The large Irish populations in the towns also taxed the patience of some church leaders. Mobile’s first bishop, Michael Portier, wrote that immigrants “[shunned] the earth which the slave works” and went north. When the Irish influx began, however, he believed it was “a heavy burden” for his diocese.⁶¹ In Charleston the growing Irish population led to the growth of the “Irish wake” tradition at funerals, which encouraged “disorder” because of excessive consumption of alcohol. The orthodox clergy, wishing for their new flock to conform to Catholic decency, preached from the pulpit against such excesses. They did admit, however, that “wakes” were “not so bad [there] as elsewhere.” In New Orleans, the large Irish presence forced Bishop Blanc to set up six new “Irish” parishes, four in “the rear,” or the American section, another in the “poor” Third Municipality, and another in the city of Lafayette. The French-born bishop welcomed this “pressure” from the Irish. During Blanc’s bitter conflict with the Creole trustees of St. Louis Cathedral in the early 1840s, Irish New Orleanians rallied behind the bishop against the “evil minded persons [i.e., Creoles], styling themselves as Catholics.” Blanc, therefore, “encourage[d]” the “Irish population” because they strongly supported “authority.”⁶²

Other clerics shared Blanc’s view of the Irish immigrants as more of a blessing than a burden. In Charleston, Bishop England recognized the importance of lay involvement by continuing a reformed version of the trustee system. Having reflected on the U.S. Constitution and its republican principles, he believed in letting the laity have as much say as possible in running their parishes and the diocese. He helped devise a written “constitution” which gave them a tangible, as well as spiritual, stake in the church. Through annual conventions, bishops, priests, and laity met to

discuss and vote on “the rights and duties of all in church government.” Although trustees could not oppose the bishop’s prerogative to appoint, dismiss, and transfer priests or have explicit jurisdiction over spiritual matters, trustees did play a large role in the day-to-day operation of their parishes. Pleased with this “voluntary” form of church government, Bishop England believed it had created “the most perfect harmony and cordial union” in his diocese.⁶³ England’s constitution provided Irish southerners with a model of American republicanism in action. It also gave them valuable experience in discussing policies, deciding issues, and implementing decisions.

While not as progressive as Charleston, other southern dioceses also inspired Irish participation. The Irish made great use of Catholic charities, but they also made large contributions to the church. Widow Margaret Haughery became “a legend in the Irish Channel” because of her financial support of Catholic orphanages. After her death, her admirers erected her statue in front of the female orphan asylum, the first monument ever erected to a woman in the United States. Father Mullon of St. Patrick’s received other large contributions from Irish New Orleanians.⁶⁴ In Natchez, P. H. McGraw supported that diocese’s efforts to build a cathedral and establish orphanages. His obituary noted that “his ostentatious deeds of charity will leave their recollection with those who in their hour of distress had few other friends.”⁶⁵ Other major Irish financial contributors to the diocese included James Curran of Jackson, who bequeathed \$3,000 to pay off the debt on the Natchez cathedral, and Doctor Michael O’Reilly of Canton, who contributed generously to the construction of a church in his hometown.⁶⁶

Bishop Elder of Natchez personally received numerous small gifts from Irish parishioners, and he often stayed in their homes during his travels. On one St. Patrick’s Day, Thomas Burke gave Elder a pony and \$40. Daniel Dohan, a planter in Jefferson County, and Francis Shanahan of Port Gibson always hosted the bishop when he visited their respective missions. Elder certainly appreciated his Irish flock. In one homily, he stated that “faith and glory are the true glory of Irishmen.” Despite many trials and tribulations, he believed that the Irish “steadfastness in their faith” would be rewarded “in heaven.”⁶⁷

The Irish laity’s steadfastness paid dividends beyond money for the church. Irish men and women of property often acted as “cultural mediators” between the church and the wider community. Taking advantage of business and social contacts, particularly with Protestants of Irish extraction, Irish Catholics helped ease misgivings or misunderstandings about Catholicism. In 1824, for example, the Protestant president of the Savannah Hibernian Society, John Hunter, solved a dispute between Irish



Margaret Haughey (The
Historic New Orleans
Collection, accession
no. 1988.50.2)

Catholics and the Savannah Free School over compulsory readings of the Protestant Bible. Hunter's efforts helped end the "offensive" practice. By 1870 the general population of this majority-Protestant city accepted Catholicism so well that they did not object to a "Savannah Plan," under which the church received money from the city to operate sectarian schools.⁶⁸

This growing integration did not signal an abandonment of principle. With or without the comfort of parish support, the Irish laity remained vociferous defenders of the faith. In Marietta, Georgia, an Irishman named Moloney defended Catholicism against the unfounded attacks of an itinerant Methodist circuit rider preaching on a street corner. Basing his argument on what he had seen on a recent trip to Ireland, the preacher accused Irish Catholics of worshipping the Virgin Mary instead of God. He asked for donations to send Bibles to the "popish" Emerald Isle to save Irish souls from damnation. Irritated by the preacher's assertions, Moloney inquired if this savior of the Irish people could speak Gaelic and, if not, how he knew which saints the Irish prayed to. Admitting that he could not speak Irish, the preacher asked "to be let alone," as an assembled crowd poked fun at his now fatally flawed sermon. The Protestant crowd admired Moloney's bravery and debating ability and sided with him against their coreligionist on the stump. Seeing this change in mood, Moloney did not show any charity toward his fellow



Statue of Margaret Haughery
in New Orleans (Author's
collection)

Christian and demanded that the Methodist apologize “to this respectable community for the insult offered to their intelligence, and to me for the calumnies uttered against my native country and my God.”⁶⁹

In Savannah, John McLaughlin defended Catholicism with his pen rather than with public speeches. In letters to the Savannah newspapers, he corrected misconceptions by pointing out that “Catholics honor, respect, and venerate [Mary], but their adoration and worship is paid to God alone.” Grateful for McLaughlin’s defense of the faith, the local bishop commended him for his initiative. Furthermore, he thanked him because “many of these rogues would be infinitely delighted if only a Catholic Bishop would give them the pleasure of noticing their calumnies against the Church of Christ.”⁷⁰

Occasionally, however, the Irish faltered in their faith. In North Carolina, one “Irish Catholic was induced to join the Baptists.” After his baptismal immersion, the congregation asked him to pray aloud, but “he gave out: ‘Hail Holy Queen.’” The “saved” Irishman’s outburst made him come to his senses and “return to the Church.”⁷¹ Certain Irish news-

paper editors remained hostile to the church. Throughout his career, J. C. Prendergast was antagonistic toward Irish clergy, with a particular dislike for Mullon and the uptown Irish in St. Patrick's. Fellow New Orleans editor John Maginnis (also McGinnis) of the *True Delta* kept up a spirited debate with an Irish priest because he believed that the Irish clergy had destroyed "the rising spirits of Irish freedom."⁷²

Prendergast and Maginnis, however, were exceptions. Most Irish southerners had great respect for their clergy, appreciating their services and sacrifices. They were similarly loyal to their parishes, seeing these institutions as providing them with physical, social, and spiritual help. Church activities and societies gave Irish people a stake in their new homes beyond their work.⁷³ The unique but familiar High Mass and the sacraments helped men like Patrick Murphy of Natchez overcome their melancholy. Friendless and alone, the depressed Murphy, like so many other Irish immigrants, found solace in the church as well as in assisting the girls in the Natchez orphanage, who wrote him letters thanking him for his generosity toward them.⁷⁴

The designation of parishes as "Irish" highlights the link that Irish southerners saw between their faith and their national identity. Everywhere they went they looked to found or join Irish parishes. In Charleston the growing Irish population on the northern edge of town on "the Neck" led Bishop England to set up St. Patrick's in 1839. In 1840 the priest there performed 83 baptisms, but by 1860 that number had risen to 213. Before St. Patrick's construction, many Irish on the Neck had gone to St. Mary's, the nearest to them and the oldest established church in the city. In 1838 St. Mary's held 56 baptisms, but by 1860 that number had declined to 5. St. Mary's remained an elite and relatively wealthy parish, but it lost a lot of its vibrancy when the Irish of the Neck went to their "own" church. The Irish expressed similar sentiments in other southern cities. Irish New Orleanians preferred sermons in English rather than in French. The Irish in Austin, Texas, "desired" an Irish priest for their growing congregation. The Irish chronicler of Catholicism in the Carolinas and Georgia insisted that the Irish immigrants were the greatest spiritual and financial supporters of the church.⁷⁵

In southern parishes, Irish class differences dissipated. In the Carolinas and Georgia, Bishop England banned churches from renting pews to the faithful. He felt that this practice created a "galling distinction between the rich and poor . . . where both ought to be on a footing of equality before their common maker."⁷⁶ Financial need eventually led to changes in England's policy; and although southern dioceses, particularly New Orleans, emphasized pew rental more than Bishop England did, the concern shown by clergy, nuns, and the more prosperous laity for the

sick and orphaned extinguished any potential for serious class divisions. Southern bishops and priests were undoubtedly very grateful to wealthy Irish donors, but they still showed genuine interest in the poor Irish in their parishes. Alexis de Tocqueville, the French traveler and observer of American democracy, noted the Irish dominance of the American church and the inherent equality of American Catholicism. He said this equality existed in the church because in doctrine “the Catholic faith [placed] all human capacities upon the same level,” attached “the same austerities upon the strong and weak,” and destroyed “all the distinctions of society at the foot of the same altar.” In organization, the Catholic Church was “composed of two elements, the priest and the people. The priest alone [rose] above the rank of his flock and all below him [were] equal” to each other in the eyes of their God.⁷⁷

This equality, emanating from Catholic beliefs and Irish ethnic awareness, could have kept Irish southerners in “cultural captivity” or “confinement” in the predominantly Protestant South.⁷⁸ On the contrary, however, from the lay trustees and Bishop England onward, Irish Catholics in the South concentrated on “Americanizing” their church. The Irish in Shreveport described themselves as “Americans.” In Spring Hill College, near Mobile, which had numerous Irish students, fights broke out not between the “Irish” and the “Creoles” but between the “Americans” and the “Creoles.”⁷⁹

Again, following Bishop England’s example, Irish clerics sought to emphasize the similarities between Catholicism and southern institutions. In particular, their support for the South’s “peculiar institution” of slavery put them and their congregations in the southern mainstream. The theology of St. Thomas Aquinas known as “Thomism” or “scholasticism,” which most of antebellum America’s earliest clerics, including John England, learned in European seminaries, emphasized reason, natural law, and acceptance of human institutions as God’s revealed will. Their belief in this theology made Catholic clerics in the South respect traditional institutions, including slavery. This conservative philosophy, which priests taught to their congregations, aided natives to accept Irish Catholics as legitimate members of southern society. The Irish forged what one historian has aptly called a “triune identity” as Catholics, Americans, and southerners.⁸⁰ During this process, prejudice against Catholicism did not disappear in the Old South, but it did dissipate. Ultimately, anti-Catholicism in the South never came close to the levels it reached in New England and other parts of the country, because even southern evangelicals who disliked all vestiges of “popery” found Catholicism less “foreign” than the abolitionist antics of their “fellow” church members in the northern states.⁸¹ Irish efforts in making their church congruous with

American and southern values played the vital role in gaining southerners' tolerance.

Between 1815 and the Civil War, the Catholic Church in the South developed far beyond its colonial English, French, and Spanish roots. With some form of diocesan structure in every state from Virginia through Texas, it became a visible presence in most southern towns. Its clerics and nuns, many of whom were Irish, catered to the spiritual and, on numerous occasions, the material needs of Irish immigrants. Although still not as fortunate as the Protestant migrants, the Catholic Irish in the South could be proud of their church and their role in its growth. They had forced church leaders to cater to their spiritual needs and, as best they could, had supported the church from their own pockets. Their assiduous hard work for "Mother Church" stemmed from their need for connection with home, but it also led them to the brink of integration. With the confidence gained from their involvement in creating vibrant parishes, the southern Irish were ready to take part in southern politics. Tocqueville echoed John England when he noted that the separation of church and state made Catholicism very congruous with American democracy. This congruity, allied with the Catholic belief in "equality," made American Catholics the country's "most republican and the most democratic" citizens, he wrote.⁸² Irish civic and political activities in the South did nothing to contradict the French traveler's observation. The church made them part of their own American and southern institution.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IRISH, THE NATIVES, AND POLITICS

Along with political experience gained in campaigns for Catholic Emancipation and Repeal in Ireland, Irish southerners' activities on behalf of Young Ireland, the Fenians, and the Catholic Church prepared them for entry into the dynamic American political scene.¹ Since politics was not alien to them, they realized the importance of their votes in southern cities. The Democrats' and the Whigs' courting of the Irish vote hastened this realization, and prominent Irish men supported and worked for both parties in the antebellum South. The Irish, however, usually allied with the Democrats, an alliance that helped many new migrants get jobs and many native Democrats win political office. The Democrats' rhetoric of the "common man" had much appeal among the Irish. One southern politician remarked that most Irish voters supported "Democracy and this word is potent with them."²

It was "potent" with the Irish for two major reasons. First, the efforts of the dominant party in the antebellum South to court immigrant votes impressed the Irish, who were used to a nonresponsive and callous government in Ireland. Their experience with the Democratic Party contrasted sharply with their political experiences in Ireland. There, an English Whig government had "killed" hundreds of thousands of their fellow countrymen during the famine. Second, along with the economic advancement available to the Irish through the "spoils system," which the Democrats had created and perfected, the Irish also, as strangers in a strange land, welcomed any native acceptance of them. They grasped and held tight the hand of friendship the Democrats had extended to them. Acceptance of their ethnicity remained the major factor in Irish political decisions.³ The Irish in turn became a sizable and influential minority in southern towns, and sometimes they determined the outcome of elections. The often-pivotal role of the Irish in city elections in the South gave them prominence beyond their minority status and was a major symbol of their integration into southern society.

Some natives, however, resented Irish involvement in politics. As early

as the 1830s, political nativism appeared in the South. When the famine influx commenced, some southerners also adopted the negative images of Irish immigrants that dominated opinion in the northern states. Nativism, however, was not as strong in the South as it was in other parts of the United States, and with the aid of the increasingly dominant Democratic Party and their own political skills, the Irish overcame nativist opposition and maintained their active role in southern society.

The “popularization” of American politics under Andrew Jackson, himself the son of immigrants, gave Irish Americans an immediate opportunity to get involved in the political fray.⁴ Jackson’s egalitarian rhetoric and that of his Democratic Party attracted a growing number of Irish immigrants to their cause. Having seen the damage caused by “aristocracies” to the welfare of the “common man” in Ireland, the immigrant Irish were “ready-made Democrats.” Thus, the party successfully courted the Irish vote with promises of continued liberal “Jeffersonian” policies on immigration and naturalization.⁵

As the Irish presence in the South increased, Jackson’s supporters in the region reminded the sons of the Emerald Isle of their opponents’ nativist tendencies. In 1828, one early Jacksonian in the South warned Irish men to beware of the “corrupt” President John Quincy Adams, whose administration condemned them. He pointed out that pro-Adams newspapers described the Irish as “Hessian flies [and] cancer worms.” Furthermore, Adams’s friends had cast aspersions on great Irish heroes of the 1798 United Irishman rebellion. The Jackson supporter believed that all Irish voters should “kill the rod that thus smites them.”⁶ New Orleans Democrats were the first politicians seriously to campaign for Irish votes. During Jackson’s reelection campaign in 1832, the Democrats reminded Irish New Orleanians that “An Irishman’s son our President is” and that the opposition National Republicans descended from nativist Federalists, who despised Irish “scholars in the doctrine of liberty and equality.”⁷ Even though the Democrats’ rhetoric may have been motivated by a purely cynical attempt to attract support, this initial play for Irish votes made a strong impression among the Irish. They were strangers, not natives, of the region; yet, some leading politicians in the country’s most popular party had nothing but praise for them. The Democrats welcomed the Irish and seemed to accept their ethnicity without questioning their capability of integrating into American society.

After the “hero” Jackson retired from office in 1837, the new opposition Whig Party provided a formidable challenge to his anointed successors.⁸ The Whigs competed for Irish votes throughout the 1830s and 1840s but remained ambivalent about immigrants. Whigs welcomed certain well-educated migrants as good Americans, but they despised the

legions of foreigners who voted “at the direction of machine politicians and priests.”⁹

Despite this ambivalence, the nascent Louisiana Whig Party campaigned for the Irish vote in the 1834 state elections after nominating E. D. White, the grandson of an Irish immigrant, for governor. Planter Alexander Porter’s support for White helped, because many Democrats saw the Irish planter and former United States senator as the most powerful Whig in the state and the real force behind White’s candidacy. Although Porter did not have much in common with plebeian fellow countrymen in New Orleans, he was the son of an Irish martyr whom the English had executed in 1798 and was a powerful symbol to Irish voters. In an effort to woo Irish voters, the Whig press in the Crescent City portrayed Democratic attacks against Porter as slurs against Ireland and the Irish. Most Irish New Orleanians were not swayed; they remained loyal to the Democrats, including a group who “[prevented] the friends of White from voting.” A number of Irish men, however, helped the Whigs win Orleans Parish with a large majority. White took 958 of the 1,500 votes cast in the parish, and some Democratic opponents blamed his large victory on the foreign vote. The Whigs thanked the Irish by appointing several of them to the celebration committee.¹⁰

By 1836, however, the Irish who had voted for White had returned to the Democratic fold in Louisiana. The Democratic press appreciated Irish support for Jackson’s former vice president, Martin Van Buren. One editor wrote: “Place them where you may, in the front of battle or in the excitement of an election, we wish no better men than Americanized Irishmen.”¹¹ Throughout the rest of the 1830s and 1840s, New Orleans Democrats reminded the Irish that “Whiggery” was the same as nativism. Other southern Democratic partisans echoed their Louisiana colleagues. For example, Tennessee’s major Democratic papers equated Whigs with nativism and nativist riots in northern cities by finding the “true causes” of bigotry in Whig rhetoric.¹²

Irish Democratic editors proved particularly adept at soliciting Irish votes. Because of cheaper methods of printing, Jacksonian America had “the highest per capita newspaper circulation in the World,” which helped bring politics to the masses.¹³ In New Orleans, Thomas Burke of the *Standard*, John Maginnis of the *True Delta*, and Dennis Corcoran of the *Old Delta* were all effective Democratic journalists.¹⁴ Another Democrat, Richard Elward, editor of the *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader* from 1848 until 1852, counted among his subscribers the politicians Jefferson Davis, John A. Quitman, and Powhatan Ellis and many Irish residents of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee. Elward published articles such as “The Whig Press and Native Americanism” to convince foreign citizens

that they should remain within the Democratic Party.¹⁵ Other important Irish Democratic advocates included John Logan Power of Jackson, James Ryan, Walter Hickey, and Doctor James Hagan of Vicksburg, and Philip J. Punch of Savannah.¹⁶

Hagan was perhaps the most colorful of these Irish editors and the most partisan. He came to Vicksburg in 1836 and founded the *Sentinel* with the help of state rights champion John C. Calhoun. Hagan continued to defend Calhoun's stand for nullification (a state's right to nullify legislation passed by the United States Congress) until he followed Calhoun back into the Democratic Party in 1837.¹⁷ Some contemporaries considered Hagan "the most talented editor in the State," but his rabid support for the Democrats gained him many enemies. Though usually a mannerly and amicable man, personal invective flowed from him when he got a pen in his hand.¹⁸

Banking, a hot political issue in Jacksonian America, provided ample opportunity for Hagan's diatribes against the Whigs, but it eventually led to his untimely death. Jacksonian Democrats distrusted most banks, because they saw them as threats to the liberty of the "common man." In Mississippi, most Democrats, including Governor Alexander McNutt, charged the Union Bank of Mississippi's management with corruption and withdrew its charter in 1840. For the next six years, repudiation of the bank's bonds remained a controversial issue. Most Democrats opposed, and virtually all Whigs supported, payment of the bonds.¹⁹

Hagan took an active role in defending McNutt and the repudiation of the bank's bonds. In 1841, he approached Edmund Flagg, his rival pro-bank editor of the *Vicksburg Daily Whig*, on a Vicksburg street. Flagg believed that Hagan was armed and intent on murdering him. The Irishman denied Flagg's accusation, but he did challenge the Whig to a duel for making the charge in the first place. When they subsequently met on the field of honor, Hagan "laid" Flagg "to the land," with no sympathy for his badly wounded competitor. After all, "you should feel little compunction in visiting on the head of the degraded puppy the utmost of our wrath," he wrote.²⁰

His victory gave Hagan the confidence to go after larger targets. In 1842, he described Sergeant S. Prentiss, Mississippi's famous Whig and a nationally renowned orator, as a "blackguard," a "rowdy," and a "cowardly braggart." Hagan continued: "[Prentiss's] whole career both public and private, not only in Mississippi, but elsewhere, has been one continued scene of gambling, drunkenness, and the most revolting blasphemy."²¹ Hagan's tirade against the Whig politician almost led to a duel between Prentiss and the recently elected Democratic governor, Tilghman Tucker, when Tucker refused to dissociate himself from Hagan's at-

tacks. Only John A. Quitman's intercession prevented bloodshed.²² Thus, one Mississippi politician could accurately describe Hagan as the only editor in America who had "been known with impunity to indulge, for a long space of time . . . in language of the coarsest personal invective."²³

Hagan moved beyond personal invective to show his Irishness. Embracing the term "Locofoco," first used by the anti-Bank of the United States Democrats, he defended the working classes against the challenge of "aristocracy."²⁴ Locofocoism was "simple, unadulterated Democracy," he said. Like Christianity, Hagan believed, it "[put] all men on an equal footing." Locofocos opposed "financering [*sic*]" and "monopoly" and proposed "sound money" to erase "swindling." Native and immigrant workingmen's best interests, Hagan postulated, lay with his brand of democracy, and all of them should be "proud" of the appellation "Locofoco."²⁵

Hagan's uncompromising support for the workingman highlighted his confidence in himself as a southerner and helped attract Irish men to the Democrats. Like other Democratic editors, he regularly charged the Whigs with nativism and encouraged all immigrants to begin naturalization as soon as possible.²⁶ Eventually, however, his rhetoric caught up with him. A son of the victim of one of Hagan's bitter articles, D. W. Adams, physically attacked Hagan on a Vicksburg street in 1843. They wrestled until Hagan had the younger Adams by the throat, at which time Adams drew his pistol and shot the Irishman, killing him instantly. Charged with murder, Adams escaped punishment when a jury acquitted him in 1844.²⁷ Some Democrats, like John A. Quitman, who found Hagan's rhetoric distasteful, did not mourn his passing, but a Vicksburg committee collected money for a monument to the Mississippi Democrats' "fearless and virtuous champion."²⁸ Whether they ever unveiled this statue is not known. Hagan had integrated so well into the southern belief in state rights that he became its champion and gave his life for it.

While most Irish newspapermen in the South were Democrats, there was one notable exception. Though he lived in the "poor third" municipality, Crescent City resident J. C. Prendergast of the *Orleanian* was a staunch Whig. Prendergast probably was influenced by Irish-born economist Mathew Carey's nationalist ideas; the editor believed that Whig policies favorable to internal improvements and industrial development helped Irish immigrants.²⁹ He worked hard to dispel the Whigs' alleged connection with nativism by publicizing the jobs Whig customs officials gave to Irish men. He also listed Whig philanthropy in support of Catholic orphan asylums and contrasted it to the lack of generosity shown by the "mushroom aristocracy" of uptown Irish Democrats. Desperate to prove that "a true Irishman could be a good Whig," Prendergast advised

one prosperous Irish-born Whig candidate to “intersperse his discourse with some dashes of native blarney, and it will tell on the plain, democratic masses, with magic effect.”³⁰

Some native Whigs also tried to muster Irish votes for their party. Leading national Whigs, like William Henry Seward of New York, opposed any restrictions on immigrant naturalization, because they thought that participation in politics, in particular Whig politics, would Americanize resident foreigners.³¹ Until the demise of the Whig Party in 1854, therefore, southern Whigs appealed for foreign votes. Their newspapers tried to create their own momentum by publishing rumors that foreigners were turning in droves to their party.³² Occasionally, they printed letters from foreign voters praising Whig candidates as friends of “the poor.”³³ Even Whig nominees for the presidency, such as Kentuckian Henry Clay and Virginian Winfield Scott, tried to attract Irish votes.³⁴

Despite these efforts, the Irish for the most part remained loyal to the Democrats, with one Irish southerner, for example, promising to vote for Andrew Jackson four years after the former president’s death.³⁵ The Democrats’ effort to woo the Irish seemed more genuine and promised greater results. Once established, the strong affinity with the Democratic Party of the Irish made them go to extraordinary lengths on its behalf. In New Orleans, the Irish-controlled third ward Democrats were a force in the city’s politics. They allied themselves with the faction associated with U.S. senator and future Confederate ambassador to France John Slidell. A wily politician, Slidell and his cohorts organized quick naturalizations and moved Irish voters to parishes where they were “needed.” The most notorious example of this practice occurred in 1844, when Slidell shipped hundreds of Irish and German voters downriver from New Orleans to Plaquemines to vote early and often for James K. Polk, the Democratic presidential candidate. Confident of winning Louisiana for Henry Clay, Orleans Parish Whigs cried foul at Slidell’s antics but to no avail. The situation for the New Orleans Whigs worsened when the city’s Creoles joined with the immigrants to take control of the reunified city government in 1853. It seemed to some Whigs that “Ireland [had] reconquered what England [had] lost.”³⁶

In other parts of the South, the growing Irish populations backed the Democratic Party just as strongly. In predominantly Whig towns such as Natchez, Vicksburg, and Nashville, the Irish formed the backbone of the Democratic vote.³⁷ In Memphis, the rapid growth of the Irish population gave local Democrats a voting bloc, much to the annoyance of local Whigs. In Savannah the Irish were also solid Democrats.³⁸

In competing for Irish votes, both parties rewarded wealthy Irish backers with nominations to positions on city councils, but the Democrats

paid more attention to the poorer new immigrants. Because of their virtual total control of federal patronage after 1845, the Democrats appointed all classes of Irish men to federal posts in cities throughout the South. Similarly, they provided public jobs in Democratic-controlled cities.³⁹

Thus, the Irish benefitted from their participation in southern politics. Both their experience in Ireland and their ability to speak English gave them easier political access than was enjoyed by other immigrant groups, such as the Germans. By embracing naturalization and by voting mostly for one party, the southern Irish created important voting blocs in the cities, even though they were still a minority in those cities and often were the pawns of political leaders.⁴⁰ J. C. Prendergast railed against the Irish “puppets” of the Democrats and pointedly noted that despite their major role in the 1853 Democratic takeover of New Orleans, and despite “their national partialities for each other, [and] their trivial leafed ties and home recollections,” they did not elect “a single Irishman . . . to office.”⁴¹ The Irish Whig had a point. Irish men did serve on city councils throughout the South but not in great numbers. Those who did were mostly older migrants who had more firmly established roots in their new homes. The famine migrants, who provided most of the Irish vote in the South, rarely got to run on party tickets. Nevertheless, they often benefitted from local government jobs and contracts, and the mere fact that the Democrats seemed more willing to run any Irishman for office made a strong impression among the poorer Irish.⁴² Public jobs were vital to many new immigrants’ survival. When ex-policeman Michael Gleeson of Charleston invited his father to join him there rather than “perishing” in the North, he felt sure he could give the older man the job he now occupied, because he knew that he could go “back to the police any time.” With a Democratic mayor, who owed his position to Irish votes, Gleeson’s confidence was well warranted.⁴³ Therefore, as in modern-day politics, the symbolism of ethnic elections and appointments, no matter how token or low on the spoils ladder, far outweighed any substantive effects these advances may have had on the minority group as a whole.

Democratic politicians’ use of Irish votes, however, also had its disadvantages, because it often brought hostile reactions from some natives, who believed that the “uneducated” Irish and Germans were “lording it” over them.⁴⁴ Still, the Democrats’ utilization of Irish votes did not create American nativism, as negative attitudes toward Irish immigrants had long been a tradition in American society. In the eighteenth century, for example, most colonial Americans disdained Catholicism. Tolerance of Catholics did grow after the American Revolution, but nativism replaced anti-Catholicism during the 1790s, when the Federalists, through the

Alien and Sedition Acts, tried to suppress immigrant support for the opposition Republican Party. The evangelical revivals of Charles G. Finney and others in the 1820s resurrected religious anti-Catholicism and combined it with nativism. Instead of focusing on the influence of Catholics in the world, Finney and his successors saw the growing number of papist Irishmen and Germans coming to America as the greater enemy, especially when the immigrants began to exercise their political power.⁴⁵

The ever-more-hostile atmosphere caused an increase in physical attacks by natives on the Irish, their property, and the symbols of their presence in American society. For example, in August 1834, a Boston mob, inflamed by the speeches of evangelical preachers, torched the Ursuline convent in nearby Charlestown. The Boston Irish did not retaliate, but ten years later in Philadelphia, Irish and nativists fought pitched battles for three days with bricks, clubs, pistols, and muskets. Evangelical preachers had increased tension in the city by (incorrectly) claiming that Irish Catholics wanted the city to ban the Bible from public schools. As a result of the evangelists' constant haranguing, the local nativist party, the "American Republican Party," grew stronger and organized throughout Philadelphia. When the "Republicans" attempted to open a branch of their party in the predominantly Irish Kensington ward in May 1844, the local Irish broke up their meetings. Nativist mobs responded by invading the Irish neighborhood and precipitating the worst of the rioting. The local militia eventually restored calm, but six people lay dead, St. Augustine's Catholic Church no longer stood, and the Irish residents had suffered over \$250,000 in property damage.⁴⁶

In the South, nativism was linked to Irish involvement in politics. Nineteenth-century southern nativism first reared its head in Louisiana. Ironically, some New Orleans Jacksonians, usually friends of immigrants, became Irish southerners' first nativist foes. Upset at their gubernatorial loss to the Whigs in 1834, the Jacksonians took their frustrations out on the local Irish.⁴⁷ Expressing the typical Jacksonian fear of "corruption" in government, they founded the Louisiana Native American Association to "save" democracy from "foreigners and foreign-born citizens." In particular, they resented the power of "aristocratic" Irish men like Alexander Porter and the affinity that numbers of his fellow countrymen felt with him. Although not as influential as their fellow "Americans" in New York, the Louisiana association did protest against the early naturalization of "the outcast and offal of society, the vagrant and the convict—transported . . . to our shores, reeking with the accumulated crimes of the whole civilized world."⁴⁸

Despite their Jacksonian origins, the Louisiana nativists found their greatest support among the Whigs, who disliked the immigrants' alliance

with the Democrats. As strong believers in law and order and opponents of those who displayed “uncontrolled impulses,” the Whigs feared the disruption the immigrants allegedly caused and were more receptive to nativism than any other group. Even Irish-born Alexander Porter, the former Whig senator who was always proud of his Irish heritage, suggested a longer waiting period for naturalization.⁴⁹

Outside of Louisiana, however, the Native American Association had little support in the rest of the South. Until the mid-1850s the vast majority of southerners disdained political nativism, and the association’s strength remained in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic regions. For example, in 1837, with the aid of an economic recession and an alliance with local Whigs, the nativists took control of New York City.⁵⁰ The efforts of Whig congressmen and senators to restrict naturalization reflected the growing importance of the Native American Association in several parts of the country. All these attempts failed, however, because of Democrats’ opposition, much of it from southern Democrats.⁵¹ A freshman congressman from Mississippi particularly “earned a measure of fame” and showed southern backing of the Irish when he attacked the nativist members and their support of stricter naturalization laws. That congressman was Jefferson Davis. Davis, who was a personal friend of Irish Vicksburgers such as William Porterfield and who later would become president of the Confederacy, castigated the nativists for their “sordid character and [their] arrogant assumption.” Rather than restricting immigrant rights, Davis added, any change in the law should make “the process of naturalization more easily accomplished.”⁵²

Davis’s opinion was not unique among southerners. The Louisiana Native American Association was an aberration. Southern newspapers, in fact, were sympathetic to Ireland and its efforts against English dominance. They published poetry that paid homage to “Hibernia’s patriot brave” and extolled “the free fair homes of Ireland.”⁵³ They supported Catholic Emancipation and Young Ireland, hoping that the fight for Irish freedom would “engulf” the United Kingdom.⁵⁴ Robert Tyler, the son of Virginia-born president John Tyler, was a great supporter of the Irish Repeal movement because he “love[d] Irishmen and hate[d] tyranny in every form.” Daniel O’Connell recognized Tyler’s backing by sending him a vote of thanks from Dublin.⁵⁵ The southern hero himself, Andrew Jackson, also expressed sympathy for the Irish struggle for freedom, but he stopped short of advocating American interference in British affairs.⁵⁶

Jackson’s desire not to antagonize Great Britain indicated the limited nature of southern support for Irish nationalism. Occasionally, a newspaper explicitly challenged the anti-British aspect of Irish American activities. One Whig editor objected to “Mr. Mooney[’s], the Irish Repealer,”

visiting his city. Having already spoken “of the impropriety of American citizens, or Irish residents of America meddling in the affairs of other countries,” he declared that Mooney’s efforts for repeal went beyond the pale when he forced his way into a woman’s house and tried to solicit money from her for the cause. The woman’s husband gave the errant Irishman “a GENTEEL LOW HIDING.” Peeved at the Irishman’s impudence, the Whig editor hoped that this “flogging” would halt any other “attempts to insult an American lady,” particularly those emanating from foreigners.⁵⁷

In general, however, southerners remained sympathetic to Ireland and the Irish people, especially when the Great Famine began. In Sumter District, South Carolina, over one hundred prominent men petitioned their General Assembly to send official aid to Ireland. They hoped that their “chivalrous State” would help alleviate “the condition of the peasantry” and the “despair [which] sits on the countenance of their stout hearts.”⁵⁸ Unfortunately for the Irish peasant, the General Assembly did not support the petition, because it was “the duty of every nation to support its own poor and to relieve the suffering of its people.”⁵⁹ The Sumter petitioners were probably naive to expect state government aid for a foreign country, but southerners and Americans in general had real fears for the fate of the Irish people. Throughout the country, voluntary relief committees formed to aid the famine-stricken Irish and collected large amounts of money to purchase food for Ireland.⁶⁰

The South took part in this philanthropic effort, Mississippi being a typical case. On 17 February 1847, news of serious problems in Ireland hit the state through the columns of the *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, which appealed for ideas to help assuage the plight of “the starving Irish.” That week, the people of Natchez answered the *Free Trader*’s plea. They met on 20 February in the Mansion House hotel and responded positively to the mayor’s suggestion that a committee be established to collect money for a relief ship to Ireland. At the meeting, prominent citizens heaped lavish praise on Ireland. One Samuel Cartwright told the attendees that “our free and happy land was watered by the blood of Ireland’s sons—unless it had been thus watered[,] it in all probability never would have been free.” He denied that the Irish were against “our Southern institutions,” and he hoped that Natchez would see its contributions to Ireland as “paying a debt.” A local planter, John B. Nevitt, asked his fellow citizens to give generously to help that “gem of the ocean . . . the green Isle of Erin.” The meeting concluded with supportive messages from the Whig *Natchez Courier* and the Vidalia, Louisiana, *Concordia Intelligencer*.⁶¹

This initial committee expanded on 5 March into a regional commit-

tee to include Adams County and Concordia Parish in Louisiana. On this occasion, the passionate speech-making fell to Colonel F. L. Claiborne. Like his predecessors, he praised Ireland and its people, especially those who had come to the United States. By 17 March the committee had collected over \$1,300, which included large contributions from local Protestant congregations. Later that year, the British ambassador to the United States thanked the people of Natchez for their altruism on behalf of the Irish people.⁶²

Other Mississippi towns followed Natchez's lead. The citizens of Jackson met on 28 February "to consider the destitution of the peasantry of Ireland." Future governor and noted southern nationalist Albert Gallatin Brown chaired the crowded meeting at which Mississippians extolled the virtues of the Irish and solicited aid to help them in their hour of need. The attendees appointed a committee of five to solicit contributions "from our citizens generally." The reporter was confident that his fellow "Jacksonians" would "confirm and strengthen [themselves] in their benevolent solicitude for suffering humanity." Within two weeks they had collected \$444.50 and sent it to New Orleans to purchase food. The committee was sure that at least another \$100 "would be in by next mail" and more would come from collections taken up by the citizens of Woodville and Vicksburg.⁶³

One of Mississippi's leading politicians took the campaign for the Irish to other states. Sergeant S. Prentiss, the recent victim of Dr. James Hagan's vicious personal attacks, did not harbor bitterness toward Hagan's homeland. On the contrary, during a visit to New Orleans in February 1847, the "Whig orator of the Old South" made "one of the greatest occasional speeches of his life." Henry Clay and his fellow Whigs in the audience listened "spellbound" for an hour to the Mississippi Whig's "sublime" oratory. Prentiss stated that the Emerald Isle had "given to the world more than its share of genius." Ireland also had "been prolific in statesmen, warriors, and poets. Its brave and generous sons [had] fought successfully all battles but their own." He then described how "gaunt and ghastly famine [had] seized a nation with its struggling grasp," and he continued to prick the consciences of his listeners by emphasizing the horrors of an enemy "more cruel than the Turk, more tyrannical than the Russian." Only "bread" could stop famine, he declared. To ensure that contributions would be forthcoming, Prentiss concluded by telling his audience to return home and "look at your family, smiling, in rosy health, and then think of the pale, famine pinched cheeks of the poor children of Ireland." If they did that, he was sure they would "give according to [their] store, even as bountiful Providence was given to [them] — not grudgingly, but with an open hand."⁶⁴

The famine-induced Irish exodus to America, however, quickly altered this favorable opinion many Americans had of the Irish. As thousands of poor Irish migrants clogged American cities, the image of the “drunken, buffoonish, violent, and irreformable Paddy” pervaded magazines, schoolbooks, and newspapers. This stereotype came to dominate American “conversation,” even among Americans who never knew any Irish people.⁶⁵ Antebellum southern periodicals also occasionally poked fun at “Paddy’s” and “Bridget’s” vagaries. From stories about the Irish laborer who thought a snake was an “ale” (eel) and picked it up only to receive a poisonous bite, to the often-hilarious accounts of Irish crime and chicanery, native southerners could not escape the Paddy image.⁶⁶ At the theater, too, southerners could see farces with titles like “The Irish Ambassador,” “The Irish Heiress,” and “The Irish in China.” Irish performers such as John Collins and Barney Williams reinforced the idea of the roguish but genial Irishman and drew large audiences to their shows.⁶⁷

The southern desire to see plays about jovial Irish men did not, however, damage the self-esteem of Irish southerners. Southern commentators were just as likely to praise Irish performances as poke fun at them. Positive reactions resulted in part from the fact that Irish actors themselves considered their plays to be sociable, witty affirmations, not denigrations, of their country and culture. For example, John Collins’s visit to Memphis prompted local newspapers to reprint a glowing report of the Irishman’s visit to New Orleans. Collins’s “songs [were] delightful,” and “a house crowded with his countrymen” filled the Armory Hall to see him perform.⁶⁸ Miss Catherine Hayes, the “Swan of Erin,” demonstrated her Irishness to entertain the people of Natchez, while the Irish McEvoy treated the same city to “a rich literary and musical treat.”⁶⁹

The Irish propensity for poverty and crime, however, countered these flattering descriptions of Irish culture. Some southerners believed that Irish deaths in yellow fever epidemics were “a judgement” from God on their “wicked habits.” The “ignorance” of the Irish and other immigrants made them easy prey for “political seduction” and caused them “under the excitement of general elections on the prompting of an unprincipled leader, to break out into excesses.”⁷⁰ One southern planter thought the Irish very similar to blacks “and instanced their subserviency, their flattering, their lying, and pilfering, as traits common to the characters of both peoples.”⁷¹ A southern woman complained that an “insolent” Irish woman working for her sister “refused to wash the children’s clothes.” This washerwoman “walked out” and called her employer “a *common* mean hearted *thief*,” thus leaving a very unfavorable impression of her nationality.⁷² Irish stereotypes could even influence children. On a trip to Europe, one southern lady’s daughter “was sure she should not

speak to one of them,” that is, poor Irish children in steerage. After a few days, however, she weakened and went “on deck to look after her dirty little protégées.”⁷³

As in the rest of the country, therefore, Irish stereotypes could stimulate “preadjustive behavior” among southerners, “suggest to [them] what to expect of stereotype targets and incline them to respond in an appropriate way.”⁷⁴ Irish southerners, however, coped with these “responses” and continued to retain pride in their heritage through involvement in their churches, ethnic societies, and politics. Their visibility in politics helped spread negative images of the Irish, but it ultimately provided them with the confidence to overcome “stereotyping.” By being part of the South’s majority party—the Democrats—the Irish had more native friends than enemies. This alliance, therefore, had a significance for the Irish in the South beyond attaining government jobs. Democratic Party activism gave them a feeling of equality they had never enjoyed in Ireland. They absorbed the equalitarian rhetoric of Jacksonian America, which stated that no matter how poor you were, as a white male involved in the electoral process, your vote was just as important as the millionaire’s. Reality in terms of who got elected to positions of high leadership might have been very different from the populist rhetoric, but this contrast did not matter to the Irish immigrants. They embraced their niche in southern politics and exploited it as best they could.⁷⁵ Their activism in politics had an added bonus in that it integrated them further into the southern mainstream. Thus, unlike the situation in other parts of the country, in the South political nativism, which was much more dangerous to Irish status than any “dirty Paddy” image, failed to take permanent hold. Most southerners were more concerned with national issues like slavery and its expansion than with the sometimes antisocial behavior of Irish immigrants. When nativism did surface, southern Democrats such as Jefferson Davis helped defeat it. Irish southerners, therefore, understood that their position in southern society depended on their participation in politics and, in particular, their continued support for the Democratic Party.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE KNOW-NOTHING CHALLENGE

In the 1850s when the “Know-Nothings” burst upon the political scene, the Irish faced a more serious challenge to their position in southern society than ever before. Replacing the Whigs as the main opponents to Democratic hegemony in the South, the Know-Nothings achieved some electoral successes. The southern Irish, who had seen the dangers of Protestant bigotry in Ireland, had the distinct feeling that the Know-Nothings were an American manifestation of that phenomenon. Every migrant, no matter how settled or prosperous, also worried that this virulent strain of nativism threatened his or her hard-earned gains in the South and integration into its society. Immigrants’ fears were unjustified, however, because the national debate over slavery and its expansion, not nativism or anti-Catholicism, was the major reason for Know-Nothing success in the South. The southerners who supported the Know-Nothings did so, for the most part, because they thought the Democrats who favored the expansion of slavery might break up the Union.

Some southern Know-Nothings, however, did support nativism and anti-Catholicism. The roots of Know-Nothingism lay in the evangelical outbursts of the 1820s and the large simultaneous influx of Irish immigrants. Thus, rural people whom the fiery evangelist Charles Finney and his cohorts influenced, and urban natives competing with Irish immigrants for jobs, found the Know-Nothings’ anti-Catholic rhetoric attractive. Both groups feared the growth of an Irish Catholic Church in America flexing its political muscle. The confidence of bishops like Irish-born John Hughes, who used his increasing Irish flock in New York City to build the church’s influence on city and state politics, made stories about a “papist plot” to destroy republican America plausible to many natives. The Catholic Church, which since colonial times had been a relatively insignificant feature of American life, was now a major force with which to be reckoned.¹

In the South, Catholic bishops did not have Hughes’s political clout. Nevertheless, the church had played a major role in helping Irish immi-

grants adapt to southern life and instilling in them a sense of pride in being a southern Irish American Catholic. From the church's spiritual and practical aid, Irish Catholics had gained enough self-assurance to be an important factor in urban elections. Thus, many Know-Nothings who were angry at Irish immigrants' participation in politics focused their displeasure on the church as the most visible sign of Irish power in their towns and cities. They did not, however, endorse the fantastic charges about Catholic plans to take over America. Ultimately, southern natives and nativists were not too concerned about Irish southerners' Catholicism. They were more worried about the abolitionist "fanaticism" of their Protestant "brethren" in the North than they were of their Irish neighbors' participation in some imaginary plot.

The Know-Nothing movement in the United States grouped the many disparate nativist forces under one political banner. Organized in 1852 as the American Party, it held clandestine meetings and kept its membership secret. When outsiders asked about the order, its members responded, "I know nothing."² They were strong in the northeastern and border states. Nativism and anti-Catholicism were only two issues within Know-Nothingism, but they were the only two issues that the disparate movement could agree on.³

Know-Nothing nativist rhetoric frightened Irish southerners. The strongest southern Know-Nothing groups existed in southern towns, and in towns their electoral successes contrasted sharply with their poor performance in state and national elections. Most of the urban Know-Nothing parties, however, soon disappeared. Only in New Orleans did the Know-Nothings continue to control city politics beyond 1856. Nativism eventually lost its appeal in the Crescent City, too. By 1860 the "Know-Nothings" existed there in name only.

The Irish played a major role in the demise of urban Know-Nothingism. Despite its "reformist" and "populist" origins, Know-Nothing xenophobia reminded Irish Americans of their own mistreatment at the hands of English and Anglo-Irish landlords. One Irish migrant wrote home to advise his family and friends to stay in Ireland, because the "Know-Nothings have murdered a number of Irishmen . . . and destroyed their property." He said that if nativist "feeling" continued as it was, "an Irishman will not get to live in this country." By staying in Ireland, he wrote, people would at least "be protected from murderers."⁴ This sentiment, so contrary to the typical view that members of the diaspora had toward Ireland, showed how desperate many Irish in America had become.

Southern Whig newspaper editors were searching for a new alternative to the hated Democrats after their own party had split along sectional lines over slavery, and they took notice of the Know-Nothings. In 1854,

their articles on the Know-Nothing movement began to appear throughout the South. Usually noncommittal, the articles first expressed curiosity about, rather than support for, the “Americans.”⁵ Then, those papers reprinted anti-Catholic articles from northern newspapers. Their articles included such titles as “A Marriage annulled by a Roman Priest” and “Roman Catholicism and Politics,” as well as sensational descriptions of “good Protestant girls” being “abducted” by nuns.⁶ These early Whig flirtations with Know-Nothingism did not yet pose a serious threat to the Irish in the South.

By late 1854 and early 1855, however, secret Know-Nothing parties had formed in every southern state to try to wrest control of those states from the Democrats.⁷ In southern cities, Know-Nothing natives went beyond reactionary anti-Democrat and pro-Union feelings. Along the Atlantic seaboard, former Whigs and some Democrats embraced Know-Nothingism as a vehicle for urban reform. Even in the traditionally Democratic cities of Charleston and Savannah, certain newspaper editors endorsed the American Party.⁸ John Cunningham of the *Charleston Evening News* led the crusade for Americanism in that bastion of southern rights. Cunningham hoped that reform of city government would provide cleaner, safer streets and lower taxes. He believed that the ruling Democrats’ illegal naturalization of foreigners in the city, who then voted to keep the status quo, blocked those necessary changes. Cunningham had thus targeted the Irish, who were very active in Charleston’s Democratic Party, as the root cause of the city’s problems. His charges against the Irish were a more serious threat than sensational articles about abductor-nuns.⁹

In the inland South, Know-Nothingism thrived in traditional Whig strongholds such as Vicksburg and Nashville. The Irish in these towns did not suffer the violent effects of nativism, because the American Party primarily wanted to save the Union and thwart the Democrats. In areas that lacked large populations of Irish, nativism usually was not an issue.¹⁰ There were, however, frightening moments for some of the inland Irish. In Columbia, South Carolina, the Irish-born parish priest there told his diocesan administrator that some local nativists had issued “gross falsehoods and calumnies against Catholicity.” The rhetoric became more dangerous when “a crowd of armed men . . . came to our study to make threats.” The priest later received “confidential intelligence” that “one stone of St. Mary’s College will not be left and that assassination will take place.” These activities were unusual, however, in areas where the Irish presence was not very strong. Indeed, six weeks after the priest’s discovery of the ominous “plot” to destroy and kill, nothing had happened and Columbia seemed “quiet.” Apparently, the “respectable” native citizenry had given “a most salutary rebuke to the intolerant and prejudiced.” The

threats had proved to be all talk, and the nativists “exhausted themselves both in the pulpit and in the press.”¹¹

The rhetoric could be just as hot in other regions but rarely moved beyond talk. Despite editor William G. Brownlow’s anti-Catholicism in Tennessee, the American Party there was primarily Unionist.¹² In Texas, too, where there was a large German population, Know-Nothings worked only to stop state rights Democrats from breaking up the country.¹³ Thus, Know-Nothings throughout the South paid only lip service to anti-Catholicism and nativism. They feared disunion more than they feared the Irish immigrants residing in their states.

Many Democrats also saw nativism as a dangerous diversion. John A. Quitman, a Mississippi fire-eater, expressed this view best in a congressional campaign against American candidate and former Whig editor Giles Hillyer. Quitman criticized the American Party’s bigotry and worried that the Know-Nothings’ distraction with foreign immigration and Roman Catholicism would damage the South. Quitman felt that while the Know-Nothings feared papists, the true threat to the South came from northern abolitionists who would attempt to reverse the Kansas-Nebraska Act. That act of 1854 allowed slavery in the new territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Quitman also feared that abolitionists would target the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which forced northern states to return runaway slaves to their southern owners.¹⁴

Some Democrats, however, did switch sides or pander to American constituencies. Albert Gallatin Brown of Mississippi, who had once spoken on behalf of Irish famine victims, officially opposed the Know-Nothings but stated that he “preferred an American Protestant to an Irish Catholic.” Furthermore, he offered “to change the naturalization laws to ten, fifteen or any number of reasonable years if the people of Mississippi desired it.” Brown later attempted to prevent Mississippi Gulf Coast Democrats from defecting to the Know-Nothings by pointing out that Mississippi Democrats had more Protestant members than the Louisiana Know-Nothings did.¹⁵

Incumbent Democratic senator Stephen Adams, also from Mississippi, went further than Brown. He became one of the South’s unofficial Know-Nothing spokesmen in the United States Senate. He introduced a bill to increase the naturalization waiting period from five to twenty-one years, but it failed to pass. Adams argued that the immigrants’ rapid naturalizations were destroying the integrity of the ballot box. Illegal Irish votes, Adams believed, corrupted numerous election results. Obviously aware of the southern Irish interest in freeing their homeland, he also feared that the Irish American vote would drive the United States into war with Great Britain.¹⁶

Most southern Democrats, however, remained sympathetic to the Irish and their struggle against Great Britain, and they despised their colleagues' pandering to nativism. Future Mississippi governor and ardent Confederate John J. McRae, highlighting southerners' lack of fear of Catholics, believed that Democrats had to oppose Know-Nothingism openly because of its "secret organization, and prescriptive intolerance in religion."¹⁷ Congressman William S. Barry of Columbus, Mississippi, defended the Irish against Stephen Adams's charges by emphasizing their loyalty to the United States and its political system and pointing out that they were no threat to democracy.¹⁸

Henry A. Wise of Virginia, a strong supporter of southern rights, surpassed Barry's efforts. He despised abolitionists and in 1861 would play a major role in taking Virginia out of the Union. During the Civil War he would express his faith in the southern cause by serving in the Confederate Congress and in the Confederate army. As the Democratic candidate for governor in 1855, however, he faced a serious challenge from Know-Nothing Thomas Flournoy. Wise managed to hold his party together, win the election, and halt "the 'serpent' [Know-Nothingism] . . . in his crawl southward."¹⁹

Virginia's rejection of nativism on the state level influenced other southern states. Years after his victory, Wise recognized its importance by stating that Know-Nothingism was "the most impious and unprincipled affiliation by bad means, for bad ends." Expressing his feelings in terms of the parallel struggles that Irish southerners understood very well, he believed that Americanism had at its core the Puritan "plans of Exeter Hall, in old England, acting on Williams Hall, in New England, for a hierarchical proscription of religions, for the demolition of some of the clearest standards of American liberty, and for a fanatical and sectional demolition of slavery." He was glad to have helped hinder its chances for success in the South. By linking the English Protestantism expounded in "Exeter Hall" with its American version that abolitionists explicated in "Williams Hall," Wise attacked two great Irish enemies. The southern Irish, therefore, also rejoiced that Wise had stopped the spread of ideas which they agreed had been concocted in "Old England."²⁰

Wise was a Democrat and thus a natural ally of the Irish. Some prominent Whigs, however, who should have been sympathetic to the American principles of defending the Union, also shunned Know-Nothingism because of its prejudice. In Georgia, former congressman Alexander H. Stephens and former senator Robert Toombs came out strongly against the party. Those Whigs who did support Americanism often endorsed nativism only half-heartedly. For example, despite having always favored the tightening of naturalization laws, the former member of Andrew

Jackson's cabinet and former Whig senator John Macpherson Berrien of Savannah interrupted his retirement to join the Know-Nothings "to promote Unionism rather than nativism and anti-Catholicism."²¹

Even former Whigs who did join the Know-Nothings had problems with the party's nativism and anti-Catholicism. Congressional candidate and former Whig Giles Hillyer of Natchez is a classic example of southern Know-Nothing ambivalence on these issues. Hillyer the "nativist" actually campaigned for Irish votes. Just one week after describing the Irish in the North—but never mentioning the Irish in the South—as "[Daniel] O'Connell's fanatics," that is, abolitionists, the Know-Nothing editor published an article entitled "Duties of the Foreign Born." In it he told his immigrant neighbors that in the interests of their American-born children, they should vote for the American ticket.²² Local Democrats enjoyed jibing Hillyer about his "conversion" to nativism. Only a few years earlier, when still a Whig, Hillyer had praised foreign contributions to the well-being of the United States. He had even advocated decreasing the naturalization waiting period from five to two years. Hillyer had also opposed Democrat Franklin Pierce's candidacy for president in 1852 because Pierce came from New Hampshire, a state that still barred Catholics from public office.²³

Despite chronic uncertainty about foreigners, the southern Know-Nothings campaigned vigorously to gain seats in Congress and take over state governments. They met with only limited success. They managed to elect a number of congressmen, particularly in Tennessee, but only two senators, Unionist Sam Houston of Texas and John Bell of Tennessee. The Know-Nothings gained seats in state legislatures, but they did not control any state government, nor did they win any gubernatorial contests. Their lack of success contrasted sharply with the party's spectacular victories in the North. The Democrats who retained power refused to abandon their Irish constituents. Thus, southern attempts to regulate immigration, like an Alabama Know-Nothing plan to exclude "foreign-paupers," failed because of Democratic opposition.²⁴

After these unsuccessful attempts at a breakthrough victory, the American Party set its sights on the presidency when in 1856 it nominated as its candidate Millard Fillmore of New York and his running mate, Andrew Jackson Donelson of Tennessee. Donelson was Andrew Jackson's nephew and an avid supporter of the Union. The Fillmore ticket was caught in the growing sectional tensions and failed miserably, winning only Maryland's eight electoral votes. Most southerners voted for Democrat James Buchanan, while northerners gave their support to the antislavery Republican John C. Frémont. Know-Nothingism began to decline in the South. To most white southerners, its "Americanism" seemed irrelevant in the

growing controversy over slavery. By 1858, its adherents gave up on the party and joined the Democrats or searched desperately for another alternative to the “Union destroying fire-eaters” and abolitionists.²⁵

Despite its ultimate failure in the South, Know-Nothingism for a time proved a threat to many Irish southerners. The American Party in southern cities used nativism to gain its greatest successes in some of the centers of Irish population. Richmond, Memphis, Mobile, and New Orleans all succumbed to Know-Nothingism’s appeal and elected Know-Nothing mayors and city councils. Mobile and New Orleans in particular had strong party organizations. Between June and December 1854, Mobile’s Know-Nothing membership grew from 678 to more than 3,000. This large support led to landslide victories for the party in municipal elections. Mobile’s nativist vote also helped elect one of Alabama’s two American congressmen.²⁶

In the major Gulf Coast cities, Know-Nothings directly attacked the Irish and their institutions. In traditionally Whig Mobile, a strong American Party embraced anti-Catholicism. New Orleans Know-Nothings, on the other hand, distanced themselves from anti-Catholicism. In a city with a large Catholic population it made no political sense for the Know-Nothings to alienate native-born Catholics. Therefore, they welcomed Roman Catholic members, but they attacked foreigners and thus ignited the most virulently anti-Irish movement in the Deep South. In other cities, Know-Nothing criticism of all Catholics deflected attention away from the Irish, but the sheer size of the New Orleans Irish population and the Democrats’ use of Irish votes and policemen there to win elections made the Irish a much more visible target for Know-Nothing anger.²⁷

The Mobile Americans attacked the Irish residents’ most important institution, their church. Violence marred some election campaigns, and on one occasion a Jesuit returning from Catholic Spring Hill College to Mobile barely escaped with his life when four nativist ruffians attacked him.²⁸ The more genteel elements of Mobile Know-Nothingism preferred legal rather than extralegal methods to hurt Catholics and foreigners. They first condemned the Sisters of Charity who operated the city hospital. The nuns, they said, had used the hospital to forward “sectarian principles” by removing “our Bibles” and stopping Protestant ministers from “convers[ing] or pray[ing] with the Sick.” When the common (city) council appointed new commissioners to the institution, the nuns resigned from the hospital.²⁹

Having chased away the Sisters, the common council members later passed ordinances that did not overtly target foreigners but sought to put them in their place. One law helped make the city’s “Christian Sabbath . . . better Observed.” Merchants, barkeepers, and draymen, many

of whom were Irish or German, faced fines ranging from five to fifty dollars for conducting any business on Sunday. The Know-Nothing council also appointed new electoral inspectors “to preserve order at the polls [and] to decide on the qualification of Voters,” that is, regulate the foreign vote.³⁰

New Orleans surpassed Mobile in its support for the Know-Nothings. The alliance of the Creole and Irish vote, which gave control of the city to Creole Democrats, made American New Orleanians eager for a strong nativist party. The American elements in the Crescent City traditionally had turned to the Whig Party to protect their interests. The state legislature’s division of the city into three “municipalities” in 1836 had solidified Whig control of the American section, the Second Municipality. When the state legislature reunited New Orleans in 1852, the American Whigs expected to control the reunified city that now had three districts instead of three independent municipalities. They were confident of success, because the legislature had also added the city of Lafayette to New Orleans in its reunification ordinance; Lafayette bordered the Second Municipality and had a similar American and Whig dominance. The alliance between the Creoles and the ever-increasing immigrants, however, destroyed the American plans to run the city. The Americans were particularly upset at the Irish influence in the police force and the reluctance of city election officials to examine naturalization credentials of Irish voters at the polls on election day.³¹

Thus, the Know-Nothings found immediate support in New Orleans. By March 1854, forces opposed to Creole control and Irish influence formed an “Independent party” to “reform” the city’s political system. Welcoming Catholics, which made good political sense in a very Catholic city, the Independent Party focused its attack on immigrants. It nominated candidates for every city office in that year’s municipal elections. Independent supporters clashed repeatedly with Irish election officials and Irish policemen. In one incident, nativist “thugs” assaulted Irish police chief Stephen O’Leary. He survived, but two Irish patrolmen whom they also attacked did not. Despite both sides’ charges and countercharges of electoral fraud, the Independents seized control of every office except the mayoralty and three judgeships. After this electoral victory, thousands of natives, rich and poor, and even a few Creoles flocked to the now-openly Know-Nothing American Party.³²

The Know-Nothings set out to dominate the city completely. Violence broke out again in September with repeated clashes between the Irish and the natives in the Irish third ward. These attacks curtailed Irish turnout at the polls in the November 1854 and the March and November

1855 elections. In March 1855, the Know-Nothings took total control of the city's common council. In November, New Orleans helped swing Orleans Parish in favor of Charles Derbigny, the unsuccessful Catholic Know-Nothing candidate for governor. Nevertheless, the Democratic vote remained strong in the city. For example, Derbigny's majority in the parish, which included New Orleans and Algiers, was only 406 in a poll of 9,498.³³ Even in the predominantly American districts, the First and the Fourth, Derbigny's Democratic opponent received, respectively, 1,839 votes, or 47 percent, and 509 votes, or 45 percent, of the total.³⁴

The sizable Irish minorities in these districts had not abandoned the Democrats. Know-Nothings, however, made sure in the 1856 municipal elections that the good Democratic showing did not hinder their progress toward total control of the city. Since their initial victories in 1854 and 1855, they had taken command of the police force away from the Democrats and the Irish. Irish voters missed their greatest defenders, and in one of the most violent elections in Louisiana history, the Know-Nothings kept the Irish vote down and won a landslide victory.³⁵ By the November national elections, the Irish had learned their lesson from the earlier violent poll, and most of them stayed home on election day. Those brave enough to venture out often met with violence. For example, a stranger with brass knuckles attacked David Mahony as he waited in line to vote in the first precinct in the American First District, the only precinct of twenty-three to vote Democratic. Not surprisingly, the Democratic proportion of the vote in the district fell to 33 percent.³⁶

Unlike other areas of nativist strength in the South, New Orleans continued to support the American Party after 1856. In the 1857 city elections, the Know-Nothings won again, but only 2,000 people voted. Their continued triumph, however, hid internal divisions. The Americans lost their great unifier, antipathy toward the Irish, when they eliminated immigrant influence in local politics. Working-class natives, who risked being wounded or killed as members of the nativist gangs that intimidated foreign voters, believed that their mayor, local merchant Charles Waterman, protected business interests over native ones. Therefore, they set out to dominate the party. In 1858, the working-class Know-Nothings nominated for mayor Gerard Stith, a printer and a member of the typographers' union. Alarmed at the proletarian takeover of their party, many more-prosperous members left to form an "Independent" ticket with the Creoles, who were anxious to return to power. Thus, class tensions started to replace nativism as the driving force in New Orleans elections. Stith won despite the desertion of the "better" elements. Having control of the "thug" element of the party, which reportedly went into immi-

grant districts “to lie, bully and intimidate voters,” certainly helped him win. The “overawed” immigrants feared the Know-Nothings during the campaign.³⁷

After Stith’s victory, the Creoles and the Irish accepted American dominance of the city. Some of the former Know-Nothing mercantile interests in the city, however, continued to oppose the labor-dominated administration and ran a “Citizen’s” ticket against their former allies. Ironically, the last Know-Nothing mayor of New Orleans was stevedore John T. Monroe. Elected in 1860 and 1861, he courted the immigrant vote and might not have won without it. For example, in 1860, the Third District, home to New Orleans’s poorest immigrants, gave Monroe 973 votes, nearly 64 percent of the votes cast and his largest majority in the city.³⁸ The Crescent City’s American Party had jettisoned nativism and had become “the standard bearer of a new cause — labor.”³⁹

The Americans now catered to the Irish, partly because the Irish had not meekly accepted their takeover of the city. On the contrary, the Irish often responded in kind. Having heard that the Know-Nothings planned to attack St. Patrick’s Church during the September 1854 disturbances, an armed Irish group led by an Irish druggist, “a Dr. John Meighan,” marched against a nativist group. The two factions clashed on Camp Street near the church, and both sides suffered casualties.⁴⁰ Two New Orleanians who went to check on a foundry “to see that it was not set on fire by the Irish” found that the foundry was not ablaze. Unfortunately, however, they “were waylaid by eleven of them [Irish] . . . and beaten unmercifully.” The reporter of this incident noted that “there will be a great deal of blood spilt before the Irish find out which stall they belong in.”⁴¹

The Irish newspaper editors in New Orleans took up the fight with their pens rather than cudgels or pistols. On hearing about one of the first Know-Nothing meetings in the city, Democrat John Maginnis of the *True Delta*, in an article similar to ones Irish nationalists wrote about British rule in Ireland, boldly declared that the movement’s “objects [were] two-fold — part religious and part political; and the ends aimed at, the disfranchisement of adopted citizens and their exclusion from office, and perpetual war upon the Catholic religion.”⁴² Maginnis constantly harangued the Americans, despite the fact that he published his newspaper in the heart of the American section. Even when many Irish had started to vote “Know-Nothing” after 1860, Maginnis attacked the “Southern Americans,” as they now called themselves, by describing them as “a northern party.”⁴³ J. C. Prendergast joined with his former Democratic foes and deserted his fellow Whigs who enrolled in the American Party. He saw the Know-Nothings as a purely bigoted group and openly opposed them.⁴⁴ By supporting his longtime enemies the Democrats, Pren-



Father Ignatius J. Mullon,
1837 (The Historic New
Orleans Collection, accession
no. 1970.11.37)

dergast allowed his ethnicity to trump his partisanship. The South's greatest Irish Whig propagandist abandoned his former colleagues, most of whom had become Know-Nothings, for the shelter of his fellow countrymen and the party of Jackson. Ironically, he was now an ally of the bourgeois "uptown mushroom aristocracy" that he had spent all of his political career railing against from the poorest Irish section.

Prendergast, however, became discouraged in 1856. He and some other prominent Irish men believed that the Know-Nothing discrimination was just like that the Irish suffered in Ireland, and they advocated a scheme to move Irish immigrants out of New Orleans to South America. This unrealistic idea never came to fruition, but it showed how dejected some Irish felt about the nativist "thuggery."⁴⁵ Even Father Ignatius Mullon, who had bravely opposed the Louisiana Native Association in the 1830s, dejectedly described New Orleans as "an abandoned city" given over to "Know-Nothings, nightly assassinations [and] blasphemous representations at the theater."⁴⁶

In spite of their despondency, the Irish did not leave New Orleans. The city was their home. They clutched at any chance to oust the Know-Nothings. When the Democrat-controlled state legislature tried to expel the New Orleans Know-Nothings by creating a central board of election in 1857 to run the city's polls, the Irish Democrat clubs sprang back into life. Americans described this new commission as "wild, misguided [and] tyrannical," but Democrats saw it as an "imperative necessity." Maginnis

and his Irish Democrat friends became “incensed” when Democratic infighting delayed the introduction of the commission beyond the 1857 city elections, thereby allowing the Americans to keep control of the city.⁴⁷

The following year, many Irish men rallied to the new “Independent” opposition movement that had formed from the class split in the American Party. An alliance of former Know-Nothings, the Creoles, and the Irish helped form a “Vigilance Committee” of nearly fifty people, which posted bills that John Maginnis had printed. These bills informed the voters of New Orleans that “After years of disorder, outrage and unchecked assassination,” the committee was “unwilling to bow down in unresisting submission to a set of ruffians, or to abandon the city in which their business, their social sympathies and their affections cluster.” The Irish provided 500 men for the armed wing of the committee, which took over the state arsenal, procured muskets and artillery, and occupied Jackson Square in the heart of the French Quarter. From there, they marched about the city to show their strength for the upcoming election. The Know-Nothings responded by forming their own armed camp in Lafayette Square in the American section.

The city almost erupted into civil war, but cooler heads prevailed. The American mayor controlled his forces, who wanted immediate action taken against the Irish men and the other “vigilants” downtown, and the 1858 elections passed without a war.⁴⁸ Although the Americans retained control of the city, “they took no serious action against the Vigilants,” and this conciliatory policy helped heal some of the ethnic divisions in the city.⁴⁹ Ironically, the Know-Nothing victory over the Vigilance Committee marked the end of the nativists’ violent tactics and the beginning of their courting of Irish votes.

While having a “gentler” nativist experience than the New Orleans Irish, other Irish southerners were just as active in opposing nativism’s growth. In Savannah and Charleston, Irish votes and electioneering provided the crucial margin in defeating the Know-Nothings. Father Jeremiah O’Neill Sr. never missed an opportunity to rail against Know-Nothingism. In the decisive 1856 Savannah election, the victorious Democratic mayoral candidate won by only 130 votes in a poll of 2,072. The previous year, Charleston’s Democratic candidate and future Confederate congressman, William Porcher Miles, had a more comfortable margin of 400 votes. Disappointed nativists claimed that 300 of Miles’s votes had been cast illegally by immigrants who had recently arrived in the city. Even if the Know-Nothing claim was not true, the Irish role in the Democratic win was still important. The victorious Miles received a great deal of support from Irish policemen and from future bishop Patrick Lynch. Following the example of his mentor, John England, Lynch normally did

not pursue partisan politics in the diocesan newspaper, the *United States Catholic Miscellany*. He broke this rule, however, when the Know-Nothing threat grew in the city; he then used the newspaper's columns to oppose the American Party openly. The Americans condemned Irish policemen, who were close to Miles, by calling them "Paddy Miles's Bulldogs."⁵⁰ In Virginia, Norfolk's leading Irish Democrat died of yellow fever, because, against his doctor's advice, he continued to travel about the city, campaigning against the nativists. In Natchez, Irish immigrants crowded local Democratic meetings where the Know-Nothings were attacked as un-American abolitionists.⁵¹

The repeated charge of abolitionism hurt the Know-Nothings much more than any opposition from the Irish. The Irish often were quick to make the accusation. Father Patrick Lynch, himself a slaveholder, harped on it in the *Miscellany*. In an article entitled "The Secret Sect," he argued that "the blatant Americanism so prevalent in the Northern States in the pulpit and the arena is wedded to abolitionism." He continued, speaking for his fellow Irish and other naturalized Catholics: "We are American citizens, but we love the State and section wherein we have fixed our habitation, and neither threats nor sneers shall deter us from defending their rights and institutions against any and all assaults — be they open or insidious, come they from the pulpit or the secret patriot's rendezvous — to the best of our ability." Lynch's contrast of Irish Catholics' solid fealty to the South and its "institutions" with Know-Nothingism's suspect loyalty resonated with many native southerners. A Charleston "State rights and Southern rights" meeting held in the Hibernian Hall passed a resolution stating that "the true Southern spirit speaks out and condemns the religious bigotry and demoralizing influences of the new secret sect." One Georgia politician condemned nativism as "unchristian fanaticism," believing that the Know-Nothings' real goal was the "abolition of slavery." This native southerner, like Irish southerners, saw the parallels between the Irish and southern struggles against northern abolitionist evangelists.⁵² A Protestant Tennessean of Scots Irish heritage expressed a similar disdain for his northern brethren's fanaticism. He felt that Roman Catholics were more trustworthy than the Know-Nothings, because "they are the most conservative *Church* in the *Union* on the subject of slavery." While he still thought "Popery . . . a horrid system," Catholics were fine with him, because they were "not as much under the will of the clergy as the Methodists," especially the northern Methodists who favored abolition.⁵³

In a country becoming increasingly divided over slavery, the Know-Nothing attempt to please northerners and southerners by straddling the fence on the slavery issue made them irrelevant to both groups. The new Republican Party, formed in 1854 by northern opponents of the

expansion of slavery, absorbed most of the Know-Nothing support in the North. This amalgamation of nativists, free-soilers, and abolitionists turned the Republicans into the majority party in the North.⁵⁴ Once nativism became associated with the “Black Republicans,” nervous southerners abandoned the American Party. The Democrats, portraying themselves as the only true protectors of southern rights, reaped the political benefit.⁵⁵

Thus, the Irish in the South survived the Know-Nothing threat. Despite discrimination and violence, they emerged stronger from the experience. Their community organizations, their church, and their alliance with the Democratic Party were strong enough bonds to help them outlast the Know-Nothing assaults. Their increased ethnic awareness had helped achieve that outcome. With enhanced confidence in their Irishness, they continued their involvement in politics and retained their faith in themselves and in their position in the South. In North Carolina, Edward Conigland believed that prejudice against Catholics was strong in his new home, but it could not prevent Irish upward mobility. He wrote that although “politicians and bigots rave as they may, to serve their own ends, neither a man’s creed, nor his birth place, [could] mar his prospects.”⁵⁶ In Mobile, citizens who opposed nativism built a new hospital for the Sisters of Charity directly in front of the city hospital. The Catholic bishops of New Orleans, Mobile, Jackson, and Galveston thought that the Know-Nothing controversy had strengthened rather than weakened the position of Catholics in the South. Know-Nothing attacks on the church and its immigrant practitioners merely created “a vivid sense of renewal” among the faithful.⁵⁷ Facing a common enemy, Irish people of all classes had united and survived their greatest political challenge. The whole experience had eased class tensions within the Irish community. Therefore, while the “Americans” virtually disappeared from the southern scene, the Irish did not. By being a part of the South’s dominant party, they asserted their position in southern society. Thus, they were ready and willing to stand up for the South when it seemed that northerners intended to destroy the region’s “peculiar institution.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

SLAVERY, STATE RIGHTS, AND SECESSION

The Irish supported African slavery in the South. Wealthier Irish men had no qualms about buying slaves, and those too poor to purchase chattel did not oppose the institution. They realized that its existence was the key to their survival and prosperity. Slavery provided economic opportunity for Irish immigrants, but, more important, it made them members of the “ruling race.” Their white skin and their acceptance of slavery automatically elevated them from the bottom of southern society.¹ Thus, they did not have to “become white” but immediately exploited the advantages their race accorded them. In this process, they were not sacrificing tangible economic gains in return for the “psychological” benefits of “whiteness”; rather, they were making a rational decision not to turn against the society where they saw unprecedented possibilities for themselves and their families.² The oppressive slave society in which they lived provided more freedom and opportunity than they had ever attained in Ireland. This distinction was important to the Irish in the South. They bristled at criticism of the economy that had given them the chance to succeed. When anyone challenged their solid position above the slaves or questioned their loyalty to “southern traditions,” the Irish were quick to defend themselves. Through their support for slavery, which after 1830 increasingly became an article of faith for a majority of southerners, the Irish gained native respect. Although most of the Irish were not rabid state rights “fire-eaters,” they virulently opposed any attack on the “peculiar institution” and often contrasted the paternalism of slaveholders with the callousness of Anglo-Irish landlords. Thus, despite a high regard for the United States and its Constitution, the Irish supported secession when it seemed the only option to prevent the destruction of the institution that had helped give them their status in the South.

During a visit to Cork City, Ireland, in 1845, black abolitionist Frederick Douglass “sampled the special brand of equality, of social comfort that he was to champion for the rest of his life.”³ On a triumphant tour of the country, he noticed that the Irish did not judge people on the color

of their skin but on their merits as human beings. Particularly impressed with Daniel O'Connell, Douglass wrote: "No transatlantic statesman bore a testimony more marked and telling against the crime and curse of slavery."⁴

Once the Irish got to America, however, they quickly lost their sympathy for African Americans. The earliest Irish in the nineteenth-century South seized the opportunity to take part in slavery. Frederick Stanton of Natchez, for example, made a fine living as a cotton factor and soon bought slaves and plantations. On the eve of his death in 1859, he owned 333 slaves scattered over sixteen plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana.⁵ Like Stanton, Maunsel White of Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, operated a commission business and also owned slaves. In 1850, one of his four sugar plantations contained 192 slaves, male and female, ranging in age from one to eighty.⁶ Such large numbers of slaves placed these Irish men among the elite of southern society. They enjoyed enormous wealth and lived ideal plantation lives in large mansions, while overseers managed their immense holdings.⁷

Like most southern slaveowners, however, the majority of Irish slaveholders did not reach the heights of Stanton or White. Many had to work beside their slaves.⁸ The Irish settlers of Locust Grove, Georgia, and Sulphur Springs, Mississippi, had only a few slaves on their farms. John Ward owned five slaves, including two children, while his neighbors Patrick Burk[e] and John Kelley owned just one slave each. One of the original Irish residents of Locust Grove, Murtha Griffin, did manage to acquire forty-two slaves by 1860 despite increasing prices. The Irish migrants who left Georgia to settle in Sulphur Springs brought their slaves with them for use on their new property.⁹

In towns, too, where most of the Irish lived, Irish artisans and merchants bought slaves. In Mississippi, merchants P. H. McGraw and P. J. Noonan owned one slave each in 1860.¹⁰ Alice Sharkey reported that her brother in New Orleans had "3 black slaves . . . who help him pave the streets."¹¹ In the same city, drayman Dennis Donovan owned six slaves, all male and aged between twenty-three and thirty, who probably worked as teamsters for him. Also in New Orleans, noted journalist Dennis Corcoran possessed three slaves, while Father Mullon, pastor of St. Patrick's and "hero" to the Irish New Orleanians, owned two.¹²

Prosperous Irish urban businessmen invested in slavery for profit as well as for labor. George Black of Charleston, who occasionally hired Irish men to work in his construction business, bought one "Ishmael, a Bricklayer and Plasterer," to work for him. He also frequented sheriff's and estate sales looking for "bargain slaves." In 1856, he purchased one slave at "a discount" because of a "defect in a finger."¹³ Michael Dillon, a

prosperous merchant and sometime city alderman in Savannah, continuously bought and sold slaves from 1827 until his death in 1846.¹⁴ Patrick Murphy, who came to Natchez to work on construction projects, saved his money and speculated in slaves — selling one “George” for \$1,500 on the eve of the Civil War.¹⁵

Thus, Irish immigrants realized fairly quickly that the means to greater prosperity in the South often came through slavery. They also rapidly learned the methods of controlling human property. John McFarland, a cotton factor in Yazoo City and New Orleans, believed that “a negro” was happiest when “he [lived] under strict enforced laws and [was] kept busy.”¹⁶ James Francis Tracy, who had just inherited a plantation from an uncle in Virginia, whipped a female slave who had “the most abusive tongue, and wicked expressions.” A “horse whipping,” however, made “no impression on her,” and Tracy threatened to “send her to Carolina” to “cool her” rebellious spirit.¹⁷ Anthony Campbell, a 1798 rebellion exile living in Natchez, placed an advertisement in a local newspaper seeking the return of a runaway slave who had “a cheerful countenance and handsome address.” The runaway could be easily identified, because he had “been lately well whipped for theft and . . . the scars are not yet healed.”¹⁸ Patrick Murphy felt “sorry” for one “poor Neville” who had gotten into a fight with “Winston,” but he still whipped the bondsman for behaving “so stupidly.”¹⁹ These Irish slaveholders seem to have absorbed the paternalism of the “peculiar institution” fairly rapidly. Punishment was a key tool of an efficient slaveholder, but one had to see it as a burden more than a pleasure. There is a certain parental exasperation in Tracy’s tone, and Murphy implies that he was punishing “poor Neville” for his own good, just as one would punish a child. Most native slaveowners would have recognized a commonality of sentiment between themselves and these Irish men and would have seen the foreigners more as colleagues than strangers.²⁰

Most Irish southerners, however, did not have the chance to buy or “discipline” slaves; thus they fell into the majority group known as plain whites. The increase of slave prices throughout the 1850s put slave ownership out of reach not only for the Irish but also for most other southerners.²¹ Nonetheless, these poor Irish had a relationship with slaves, on many occasions working in close proximity with them. In New Orleans, Irish workers occasionally worked for slave artisans. In Georgia, Irish and slave laborers worked side by side on the Brunswick Canal.²² On the banks of the Alabama River, slaves pushed cotton bales down ramps onto steamboats to Irish laborers, who in turn had to “capture the wildly bounding bales and stow them.”²³

The Irish also often lived in close proximity to urban slaves, because in

southern cities slaves and free whites lived near each other. Unlike the case of land on plantations, city space was at a premium, so “master and bondsman would share a plot, usually not larger than 50 feet by 150 feet and often smaller.”²⁴ Therefore, most Irish southerners had everyday contact with slaves. For example, Mobile’s sixth ward had both the largest Irish and the largest slave population in the city.²⁵

This close proximity between free whites and enslaved blacks seriously challenged city ordinances controlling chattel. One antebellum resident of Charleston worried that “the very denseness of population and closely contiguous settlements” required “closer and more careful circumspection.”²⁶ Cities provided slaves with greater opportunities for fraternization with each other and free blacks, as well as greater opportunity for earning money and escaping. Free black Denmark Vessey led a slave rebellion in 1822, which brought the dangers of urban slavery vividly into focus for the South’s city dwellers. Other major slave rebellions in the Old South also “had an urban dimension.”²⁷

White civic leaders responded with laws regulating not only slave movement but also “colored” churches and “illicit trade” between slaves and free people. The last was the most frightening to city officials, because it led to racial mixing and slave crime. In Vicksburg, in 1859, John “Red Jack” McGuiggan received a twenty-year sentence for selling forged passes to slaves. His committing this crime during a time of high sectional tension probably earned him his rather harsh sentence.²⁸ Mobile authorities brought one Martha Ann Logan and “a slave named David” to court on what a local reporter, emphasizing his dislike for interracial sexual relationships, described as “one of those disgusting charges that is deemed goodly and fashionable in Boston and other places in the North.”²⁹ Catherine Harrington and Kitty Donigan were prosecuted, respectively, for “trafficking [i.e., illegal business, usually selling liquor] with slaves” and “harboring a slave.” Irish saloon keepers throughout the South illegally sold liquor to slaves.³⁰

These relationships between slaves and Irish immigrants made an impression on observers of the Old South. British-born Fanny Kemble, who lived on a Georgia plantation during the 1830s, believed Irish laborers in the area were “passionate, impulsive, warm hearted, generous people” and “pestilent sympathizers.” She concluded, therefore, that “with a sufficient dose of American atmospheric air in their lungs, properly mixed with a right proportion of ardent spirits . . . they might actually take to sympathy with the slaves.”³¹ Some native southerners, too, feared that Kemble’s opinion might become a reality. Christopher Memminger of Charleston felt that white workers, and foreign workers in particular, were “the only party from which danger to our institutions is to be ap-

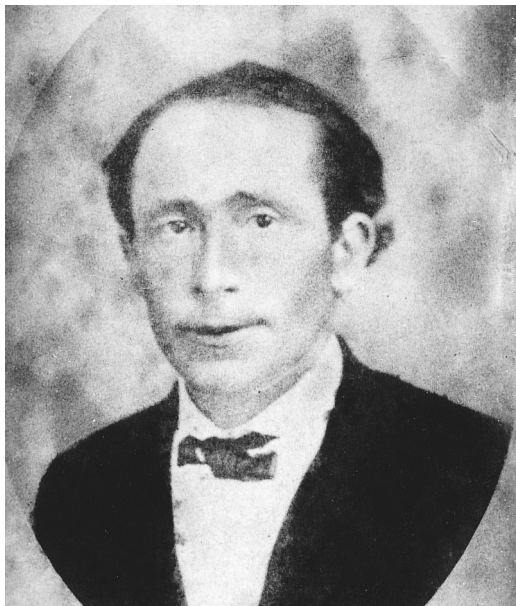
prehended among us.” These workers, who were increasingly replacing “negro mechanics . . . would soon raise the hue and cry against the Negro, and be hot abolitionists — and every one of those men would have a vote.”³² Upset at the militancy of Irish labor, many southern businessmen supported Memminger’s view. For example, in Savannah, striking Irish longshoremen forced local merchants to try to “disperse altogether with this foreign aid, and employ slave labor in their stead.”³³ After secession in 1860 and 1861, a number of prominent former unionists proposed disfranchising poor whites to prevent “revolution.”³⁴

The perceived closeness between free blacks and Irish men also created fear among southern leaders. Many proslavery advocates saw free blacks as “fifth-column” abolitionists. The fact that Irish men and free blacks often lived in the same neighborhoods, worked the same jobs, and drank in the same “grog shops” persuaded some southerners that perhaps the Irish were also a part of this fifth column. The occasional Irishman’s proclamation of himself as an “abolitionist” only increased this fear.³⁵

Native fears of Irish abolitionism, however, were unjustified. Fanny Kemble ultimately contended that the Irish were “despisers of niggers.” Employers on the local Brunswick Canal had “to segregate the Irish from slaves to stop the Irish fighting with the bondsmen.”³⁶ Patrick Murphy of Natchez slapped a slave girl for being “insolent” while she served him breakfast. When Murphy’s employer told the Irishman that he had no right to beat any slave on the property, Murphy packed up his tools and quit the job. On another occasion, when a planter let a slave sit at the same table with Murphy, the proud Irishman told him that he “was not one of them to sit at second or negroes [*sic*] table.”³⁷

Even Irish men who did not have personal contact with slaves often disliked them and particularly disliked their advocates. P. Kennedy, working hard on a Virginia railroad, complained about “Yankees” who went to Europe “to make money . . . complain about slavery and stir up English ladies,” because “the slave in Virginia is better fed and clothed than the poor Irish farmers.” “[O]h, it would be well,” he added, “for the Irish labourer if he was [*sic*] half as well fed and taken care off [*sic*] as the slaves [whose] master has an interest in the slave.” Kennedy continued, “there may be a few bad masters, but compare the conduct of bad masters with the conduct of *Irish Land Lords* who will drive out [their] Tenant[s] on the road side to starve,” and nobody, he thought, could justifiably condemn southern slavery.³⁸

Robert McElderry felt that the image in Europe of “the slave driver cracking his whip and in every way one can imagine torturing human beings because they happen to be of a different color from their masters” was a false one. On the contrary, McElderry wrote, “if you only want to



Patrick Murphy (Patrick Murphy Papers, Mss. 309, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.)

see a happy and contented lot of creatures, you should see a number of slaves after the days work is done and hear them play the banjo and see their dances.”³⁹ McElderry’s younger brother William echoed his brother by protesting that slaves “go about dressed in the very best . . . and sometimes make in a week 10 or 12 [dollars] and they have that to themselves.” Although he had “seen some of them whipped,” William believed that those who were, “deserved it.”⁴⁰

Both McElderrys were defending their adopted homeland against charges made by relatives in Ireland. Moses Paul, also of Virginia, took even greater umbrage at his sister’s charge that Americans were “savages” for supporting slavery. Paul responded by defending slavery with an enthusiasm that would have made the most rabid fire-eater proud. He admitted, “tis true we have our niggers by [the] thousands, and a very useful part of creation they are.” Southerners, himself included, Paul believed, were “obliged to have niggers to make money.” While writing this letter, he could “hear the auctioneer displaying his eloquence [selling] a lot of fine, healthy, likely negroes.” Thus, he objected to “the people of Ireland [who] talk in the most horrified terms of Negro slavery in this country, [while] these same slaves present an appearance of comfort, happiness, and content, a hundred per cent greater than the poor Irish, and they are more comfortable and happy.” Like other commentators, Paul believed that a southern slaveholder, “however absolute his

power, never exercises such tyranny as do Irish men." Unlike the Irish landlords, no slave owner, "however great the gain[, would] starve" his slaves.⁴¹

Irish opinion of free blacks was not much better than their view of black slaves. Although cohabitation between Irish and free blacks did occur, it remained a rarity in southern cities. The Irish usually lived with each other or other white workers. In Charleston the Irish who lived with other ethnic groups were least likely to live with free people of color. The poor fifth ward had large numbers of African Americans and Irish, but when one examines residential patterns on the micro level, one finds voluntary segregation. In fact, one scholar has discovered that in this ward "no Irish families listed in a multifamily dwelling . . . shared a building with free blacks." The poorest residents lived in shanty-lined dead-end alleys called "courts." These courts remained very segregated.⁴² The Irish saw free blacks as competition for jobs, not as potential allies against "greedy employers." The Irish comprised a large proportion of the working classes in southern cities, and they took part in efforts to restrict free black freedoms to seek skilled work or have any equality. In Natchez, Mississippi, the working-class "Inquisition Society" proposed reenslaving free blacks. In Charleston, Irish, German, and American mechanics tried to limit slave hiring, but they also called for a capitation tax on free blacks to put them "on an equality" with white workers. Whenever white protests about free blacks increased, "Paddy Miles's Bulldogs" concentrated on arresting those who had not paid the tax.⁴³ In New Orleans, competition between Irish and black draymen led to numerous fights and assaults. Irish and black domestics also disliked each other. When discussing the greatness of New Orleans, one Irish maid remarked, "It's a fine city in truth it is . . . Barrin the nagurs."⁴⁴

Slaves and free blacks responded in kind to attacks by the Irish and other white workers. One song of the common slave included the line, "I'd rather be a nigger than a poor white man." A migrant from Maine who tried to start a business in Augusta, Georgia, remarked that "the Negroes are however too sycophantic as a race, but there are some exceptions and these are too proud to speak to a common white man like myself."⁴⁵ If this entrepreneurial American met with disdain from some blacks, undoubtedly Augusta's large Irish population did as well. In New Orleans, one black worker remarked that the Irish "hadden so much sense in dar heds as I could carry in de pam of my han," while another asked a fellow slave carrying mortar to a bricklayer, "you is turned Irish-man is 'ou?"⁴⁶

Occasionally, however, the Irish and African Americans showed kindness and even affection for each other. Nancy Wightman gained permis-

sion from her Alabama planter employer “to collect all the coloured folk” she could “to teach.” She hoped to do much “good” with this work and asked a friend to pray for her efforts.⁴⁷ Patrick Lynch, a native of Dublin, came from Ohio in the 1840s to manage a plantation in Concordia Parish, Louisiana. While there, he fell in love and married Catherine White, a slave on the plantation. After the marriage, “he gave every evidence, openly and publicly, of being delighted,” and on every special occasion he made Catherine “the center of attraction.” Lynch, however, knew that their marriage did not change his wife’s status as a slave. Determined to secure her and their children’s freedom, he moved to New Orleans to work with his brother who lived there. Unfortunately, a short time after he arrived in the Crescent City, he took ill. He did, however, manage to make it back home — against the orders of his physicians — just in time to die with his family surrounding him. His family remained in slavery, but one of his sons would later become Mississippi’s first black congressman. Although he never really knew his Irish father, Congressman John Roy Lynch admired him for the brave and progressive attitude he had shown toward a Louisiana slave.⁴⁸

Slaves also occasionally showed kindness toward the poor Irish. Prince Johnson, a slave from Carroll County, Mississippi, was not “too proud” to help “a common white man.” Owned by a strict Presbyterian mistress, Prince was a good friend of his mistress’s daughter. When “young misus” married the son of an Irish ditcher named Farrell, “to spite her parents,” the family ostracized their errant daughter. Prince, however, continued to visit her and her Irish husband. On one of his visits, he noticed that the young couple had no cow. Taking pity on their plight, he persuaded his mistress to donate a cow (“de bes cow in de lot”) to them.⁴⁹

Thus, on a personal level, racial relations between the Irish and southern blacks were complex. On an official level, too, the Irish could show genuine concern for African Americans. Bishop John England had always desired to open a school for “free coloured children.” He eventually got the money to do so and was pleased with his effort. Therefore, Fanny Kemble’s dismissal of the Irish as just “despisers of niggers” was too simple. Economic competition could have led to feelings of hatred and acts of violence, but the proximity of the urban blacks and Irish made constant dispute impractical. The Irish had enough problems in their neighborhoods without having to deal with race riots. Therefore, the Irish often pushed the envelope on race relations, the classic example being fraternization between slave and immigrant in the numerous local saloons and in the workplace. In spite of racial differences, personal relationships must have formed between neighbors and coworkers, as indeed they did even between master and slave on the plantation.⁵⁰ No

wonder zealous defenders of slavery became nervous about the potential of an Irish challenge to the prevailing racial hegemony.

Ultimately, however, native southerners need not have worried. Although the nonslaveholding Irish may not have endorsed the rigid racial theories behind slavery, they did not challenge the rightness of slavery itself. Bishop England was forced to close his school for free blacks in 1835 in response to the hysteria caused by massive amounts of abolitionist mail showing up in the Charleston post office. Some nativists had tried to exploit his free school to attack the church by spreading rumors that some of the offensive mail was destined for Catholics. A committee of leading citizens protected church property and no trouble occurred. England then bowed to the wishes of the “respectable committee conveying the wishes of the citizens” and closed the school. He did not, however, become bitter against his fellow Charlestonians but instead took his frustration out on the abolitionists. Describing them as “fanatics,” England’s newspaper characterized the school’s closing as the “result of the uncalled for and mischievous interference of the *saints* with a state of society which they do not understand, and with which they have no right to meddle.” The attack continued: “Those who have known the *saints* in Great Britain and Ireland, know that whilst they were petitioning for NEGRO EMANCIPATION and the BETTER OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH, they were disseminating tracts filled with the foulest calumnies, and straining every nerve to OPPRESS IF NOT TO EXTIRPATE THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.”⁵¹

Irish southerners showed the depth of their feelings against abolitionism by ignoring the great hero Daniel O’Connell’s pleas for an end to slavery. They had found success in a slave economy that they could never have found in Ireland. They would not allow anything, even personal feelings of sympathy for a black neighbor, to jeopardize that accomplishment. Their determination is best seen in their rejection of the Liberator when he threatened their new home’s social and economic values. From Ireland, Maria McLaughlin wrote to her brother John in Savannah to criticize him for questioning Daniel O’Connell’s right to speak out against slavery. Maria believed that O’Connell was right to oppose “the enemies of liberty.” She added that “here the black man is as much respected as the white, which is more than you can say of your so called *free* country.”⁵² Her brother, who had been made welcome by men involved in the cotton and slave businesses and had received a job as clerk from one of them, had chosen, it seems, the values of the South over those of his native land.

John McLaughlin was not the only Irish southerner to oppose O’Connell’s attacks on their southern institution. On behalf of the large New Orleans Repeal Association, journalist Dennis Corcoran wrote to O’Connell to tell him that any “attempt to subvert [slavery] now, as the abolition-

ists contemplate, would cause a civil war.” Even in the North, Corcoran pointed out, “Irishmen have no feelings in common with abolitionists.” O’Connell’s perceived support for abolition, he added, hurt the Repeal Association’s efforts in New Orleans, because the Louisiana Native American Association used his abolitionism to attack all Irish New Orleanians. Corcoran feared that any support for O’Connell’s call for black freedom would alienate “the slaveholders of the South—who received us among them with a liberality, and extended to us a hospitality which it is fair to presume would not be extended to us in the Eastern States, where prejudice against Irishmen and bigotry against their religion seem indigenous qualities.”⁵³ Therefore, according to Corcoran, O’Connell’s actions endangered Irish integration into southern society and all the opportunities that integration had provided and would continue to provide in the future.

Father James McGarahan of Mobile also defended slavery when he delivered a contribution to the Repeal Association in Dublin. McGarahan insisted that slaves were “well-fed, well taken care of, and sleek in their appearance.” He, like Corcoran, also emphasized the warning that emancipation would bring serious disorder and violence to the South and the United States. O’Connell, speaking after McGarahan, welcomed the priest and Mobile’s support for Repeal, but he continued to insist that “so long as slavery existed in any quarter of the globe, he would be found among the ranks of its bitterest and most decided enemies.”⁵⁴ On a rare visit to Ireland, Father Jeremiah O’Neill Sr. reportedly scolded O’Connell for “going out of [his] way to cast a nettle on the grave of the father [slaveholder George Washington] of my adopted country.” He went on to advise the *Liberator*: “If you succeed in rendering the condition of the Irish peasantry, in a temporal sense, as comfortable as the Southern slaves, you will accomplish much; you are now talking too soon.”⁵⁵ In telling O’Connell to leave the South alone and concentrate on the much worse situation in Ireland, these two pastors were speaking for their parishioners as well as themselves.

Perhaps the strongest response to O’Connell’s opinion came from his friend and former colleague John England. England wrote a letter to O’Connell, which was published posthumously, accusing him of being “ignorant” of the South. Writing as “a Carolinian,” the former Corkman stated that with O’Connell’s attack on American slaveholders “a more wanton piece of injustice has never been done to a brave and generous people.” He concluded that “whilst with every Carolinian I know, I lament an evil which Britain has superinduced, *and which we cannot at once remedy*, I deny your right to interfere, and I pray that you may succeed in

raising the ruined population of Ireland to the level of the comforts of the Carolina slave.”⁵⁶

Despite his strong abolitionist position, O’Connell, however, continued to accept contributions from Repeal associations in the slave states and the support of Robert Tyler, President John Tyler’s son and a Virginia slaveholder. It was not until 1843, in fact, that O’Connell clarified this ambiguity by declining to accept money from Irish southerners and their friends. He chastised them for supporting slavery and stated that those who stayed in the South and “dare countenance the system of slavery . . . we will recognize you as Irishmen no longer.”⁵⁷

Irish men throughout the South responded by abandoning O’Connell’s Repeal Association. One John Quinn of Charleston complained to O’Connell that his open attack on southern Repeal Associations was a horrible tactical move because “more than one half of the money sent home to Ireland is sent by Irishmen and Americans, who have no slaves, and are as opposed to slavery as yourself.”⁵⁸ The Irish in the South were not as committed to abolitionism as O’Connell. In fact, they despised the whole movement. His attack fatally damaged Repeal in the South and perhaps in the entire United States and in Ireland as well. The Charleston association disbanded, stating that “as the alternative has been presented to us by Mr. O’Connell” between loyalty to their state or his Repeal Association, “we say South Carolina forever.”⁵⁹ Only Savannah’s Repeal Association refused to disband. Its members announced their intention to keep American politics separate from their Irish movement. Nevertheless, they still complained that O’Connell had “learned his Southern institutions from Northern Abolitionists, the dire enemies of real liberty, and the notorious enemies of Ireland’s religion.”⁶⁰ Whether outright opponents or merely critics of O’Connell, the Irish in the South found the rhetoric of American evangelical abolitionists very familiar. They recognized the American abolitionists as clones of the evangelical abolitionists in Great Britain, who had described Irish troubles as “the will of God.”⁶¹ The British group, they believed, had destroyed Ireland, and now it seemed their American “cousins” were intent on wreaking similar havoc on the South. In immigrant minds, the abolitionists wanted to “reform” Catholics and their habits just as much as they wanted to reform southern institutions.⁶² The Irish could not countenance any fraternization with this element, even if one of their Irish heroes was inclined to abolitionist beliefs.

Yet Irish southerners continued their interest in Ireland and its struggle for self-government, but increasingly they moved toward the more radical Young Ireland elements. Throughout the rest of the 1840s, Irish

southerners became sensitive to connections between Irish struggles and abolitionism. Before he could come to the South, Father Mathew had to assure southerners that despite his meetings with abolitionists, he did not want to interfere with slavery. Furthermore, while in the region, he promised to devote himself only to “the all absorbing cause of temperance.”⁶³

Fortunately for Irish southerners, they did not have to worry about the Young Irelanders like John Mitchel, who came to the South after the failed 1848 rebellion. These “revolutionaries” strongly supported southern institutions. John Mitchel in particular became a strong advocate of the southern cause. Although a supporter of Irish liberty, Mitchel admired southern plantation society. As an opponent of British “bourgeois radicals,” whose laissez-faire economics had attempted to “exterminate” the Irish people, Mitchel found much to admire in the paternalism of the Old South. On a trip down the Mississippi River on his way to New Orleans, Mitchel noticed many “southern gentlemen” who were “men of refined and dignified manners, with that gentle tone of voice and courtesy of demeanor which are characteristic of the South, and which I attribute to the institution of slavery.” During a stop in Natchez, he befriended Giles Hillyer, the former Know-Nothing candidate for Congress, and found the newspaper editor “an agreeable companion.” Stunned to learn that Hillyer had been a member of the American Party, Mitchel contrasted his southern gentility with northern rudeness.⁶⁴

Thus enamored with the “peculiar institution,” Mitchel used his Knoxville-based *Southern Citizen* to advocate its continuation and expansion. In particular, he supported the reopening of the African slave trade. Absorbing the racial-superiority principles of some of the South’s strongest proslavery writers, Mitchel published articles that focused on the “backwardness” of Africa and Africans and on how “beneficial” slavery in America would be for them. Reopening the slave trade, Mitchel believed, would lower slave prices, widen the number of slaveowners, and help spread slavery’s influence.⁶⁵

Slavery needed to expand territorially as well. Mitchel wanted the United States government to “Americanize” Cuba and Latin America. This idea of expanding slavery southward grew among fire-eaters like John A. Quitman, who feared that the increasing number of northern free states would overwhelm the southern interest in Congress. When the federal government, because of northern opposition, declined by military action to conquer the Caribbean for slavery, southern “filibusters” took matters into their own hands and launched a number of expeditions in the Caribbean. Mitchel admired these efforts and hoped the government would follow their lead and create an “empire” for slavery.⁶⁶

Other Irish editors also strongly supported “southern rights.” James

Hagan, a protégé of John C. Calhoun, favored state rights and nullification. Calhoun had first espoused nullification during the crisis over the protective “Tariff of Abominations” between 1828 and 1833. Despite losing the initial nullification battle to President Andrew Jackson, Calhoun continued to expound his state rights ideas as the only protection for southern institutions.⁶⁷ Hagan’s prospectus for the *Sentinel and State Rights Expositor* incorporated Calhoun’s views on state rights. He called on all the southern states to endorse nullification, because it was the only way to defend slavery and protect the Union. He endorsed Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, an early fire-eater and professor of law at the College of William and Mary, who, he said, “prepared the southern mind for secession” and was a “profound, philosophic statesman.”⁶⁸

Hagan also attacked abolitionists by emphasizing “the effects of Emancipation” on “the colored race.” Emancipation, he believed, led to “dissipation, ignorance and crime . . . [and] the most painful moral and physical suffering, produced by a precarious subsistence, disease, hunger, cold and filth.” What a contrast with “the happy and contented slave of the South,” he commented.⁶⁹ If the free blacks of America and working people of Europe “could enjoy one fifth of the pork, meal and vegetable which our negros [receive],” Hagan surmised, “they would feel themselves happy when compared with their present wretchedness.”⁷⁰

Hagan saved his bitterest attacks for the nativists and the English. According to the Irish editor, the Native American Association wanted “a few of the naked and degraded barbarians of Africa . . . brought to our shores to be fed and clothed well and taught the principles of religion.” While helping blacks, they and their Whig allies intended to degrade all foreigners “to the condition of white slaves.”⁷¹ English abolitionists led by Queen Victoria’s consort Prince Albert, “the pensioned German loafer,” were in Hagan’s opinion the worst antislavery opponents. He ranted against their attacks on southern slavery, because they were “base hypocrites” who needed “to extract the ‘beam out of their own eye’” before attempting to “‘remove the mote out of ours.’”⁷² Hagan, like many other Irish in the South, enjoyed equating abolitionism with Great Britain, thereby linking Ireland’s cause with the South’s.

Equating the Irish and southern struggles gave Hagan the opportunity to retain his ethnicity while at the same time having confidence in his southernness. He had enough confidence, for example, to attack native southerners who hid “the most extensive efforts” by the North to begin “abolishing [slavery] altogether in the District of Columbia.” In the late 1830s, as a first step toward their goal, abolitionists attempted to get Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. They inundated Congress with petitions. Hagan saw these petitions, which denounced

“the freemen of the South” as “‘monsters, manstealer[s], enemies of God, etc. etc.,’” as a real threat to southern interests. To counter this “base libel,” Hagan ordered that every southerner should “deny that slavery as it exists . . . [was] evil either moral, social or political.” Any “southern man” or “southern press” who did not follow Hagan’s advice and continued to “lull our people until the enemy is upon us,” he called “dastards and traitors to their country.”⁷³ His blunt editorials show that he was not in the least uncomfortable about including himself as part of the southern people. Indeed, his rhetoric would have made any fire-eater proud. The example of Hagan, even if unique, indicates to us, as he indicated to his fellow Irish in the South, that defense of slavery could give them their opportunity for acceptance in southern society. The vast majority of them never had the platform Hagan had, but they would find other ways to show how “southern” they had become.

Undoubtedly, if he had not been killed in the prime of his life, Hagan would have been at the forefront of the defense of slavery and the South when sectional tensions increased after the annexation of Texas in 1845. Annexation and the resulting war with Mexico in 1846 made national expansion the focus of tensions between the free and slave states. Ironically, when war broke out, many southerners opposed it at first and only supported it after American troops clashed with Mexican forces.⁷⁴ The Irish, however, seized upon the war as a great occasion to enhance their integration into southern society.

Irish southerners were imbued with a desire to fulfill the United States’ Manifest Destiny to rule North America and be a beacon of democracy for the world; thus, they rallied behind the annexation of Texas and war with Mexico. They did not see the war as an extension of “racial Anglo-Saxonism” but as a chance for adventure and as an opportunity to show their loyalty for their adopted country.⁷⁵ Naturally, the Irish in Refugio and San Patricio, who had helped Texas gain and keep its independence from Mexico, were among the first to support annexation. James Power, founder of Refugio and former Mexican *empresario*, helped draft Texas’s “state constitution” that Congress approved at the end of 1845.⁷⁶ President James K. Polk, however, had grander designs for American expansion, and when his attempts to purchase more territory from the Mexicans failed he sent troops to the Rio Grande River. The Mexican government saw this action as an invasion and sent their own soldiers to counter the American force. The rival armies clashed in April 1846, the first time America started a foreign war.⁷⁷

Initially, many Irish southerners were embarrassed when a number of Irish United States Army regulars deserted to form St. Patrick’s battalion in the Mexican army. Apparently upset at poor conditions in their own

army and reluctant to fight a war against Catholic Mexico, about one hundred Irish and a few native and other foreign soldiers changed sides.⁷⁸ Irish southerners' fervor for the war, however, dispelled any shame over these Irish desertions. Enthusiasm for the war gripped the entire nation, and volunteer companies sprang up throughout the country.⁷⁹ The response was so great that some companies had to stay home. The governor of Georgia required only one company from Savannah, and the Jasper Greens won a lottery to gain the honor of representing the city in the First Georgia Regiment. The citizens gave them a great send-off, and the city government appropriated \$700 to take care of their families. The only real action they saw, however, was a scuffle they had with a company from north Georgia. The fracas escalated when soldiers in an Illinois company with guns drawn broke up the feuding Georgians. Startled by this armed intervention, both groups of Georgians turned on the men from Illinois and inflicted numerous casualties upon them. An official army investigation exonerated the Jasper Greens and put the blame for the unfortunate incident on the commander of the northern unit. For the rest of the war, the Jaspers followed General Winfield Scott on his march from Vera Cruz to Mexico City, but they did not come into contact with the enemy. Long marches in the blistering Mexican heat, along with disease, caused their only casualties. Nevertheless, they received a hero's welcome when they returned to Savannah.⁸⁰ What pride the mostly poor Irish men must have felt as an overtly Irish unit being heralded as heroes in their new southern home. While there were no other specific Irish companies from the South, other Irish men served with companies from throughout the region, and many participated in battles against the Mexicans, thereby gaining on an individual level the respect the Jasper Greens attained as an ethnic unit.⁸¹

The euphoria over the war, however, quickly dissipated. Many northerners saw the invasion of Mexico as a slaveowner's plot to expand the "peculiar institution." David Wilmot, a young Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania, expressed the northern antislavery view when in 1846 he introduced a proviso to ban slavery in the territory newly acquired from Mexico. While privately accepting that slavery was unlikely to flourish in the new southwestern territories, southerners would not accept a public condemnation of slavery. Congress did not pass the Wilmot Proviso, but the fact that a northern Democrat had introduced it frightened many southern Democrats and forced them to question their loyalty to their party over their section.⁸²

Native southerner Zachary Taylor's victory in the 1848 presidential election did nothing to dissipate southern fears. Despite being a slaveholder, the Whig president leaned toward the Wilmot "free soil" posi-

tion. Fire-eating southern nationalists called for a state rights convention to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, but Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky took the steam out of the state righters when he introduced compromise measures in the United States Senate. His measures, the Compromise of 1850, allowed the possibility of slavery in some of the former Mexican possessions and thereby placated most southerners for a time.⁸³

During this controversy, Richard Elward of Natchez replaced Hagan as the Irish spokesman for state rights. As outspoken as the *Sentinel* editor, Elward, however, managed to avoid a violent death. His loyalty to the Democrats earned him a position as Natchez's postmaster when he retired from political journalism. As a zealous advocate of southern state rights, Elward favored secession in 1850 and did not tolerate anyone he suspected of being an abolitionist. He urged his readers not to buy goods from the merchant Alfred Monroe of Natchez, because this businessman had kept some of his "Yankee abolitionist sympathies." Elward's staunch defense of the South gained him a place as a delegate to the 1851 Mississippi southern rights convention, which state rights Democrats organized to keep southern nationalism alive.⁸⁴

Hagan and Elward represented the extreme Irish southern opinion. Their stance on slavery was definitely representative, but their advocacy of nullification and secession was not. Charleston's Irish elite supported nullification, but most Irish Charlestonians, aided by Bishop England's opposition, opposed South Carolina's defiant act.⁸⁵ Bishop England, however, could not persuade the Irish Volunteers, and they prepared to defend their adopted state against federal intervention.⁸⁶

During the 1850 crisis, Irish southerners again solidly supported the Union over state rights extremists. The Savannah Irish in particular played an important role in defeating the secession advocates. The crisis began in response to Henry Clay's compromise, when the Democratic Party in the South divided into southern rights and Union wings. The strongest southern rights parties demanding secession were in the Deep South. The debate in Georgia became the focus for this region because it had the largest population in the Deep South, and its political leaders, unlike those in South Carolina, had the respect of other southerners. Thus, the other states began "to look to her for sound leadership."⁸⁷

Supporters of Clay's compromise in Georgia fought a tough campaign for their cause. At the 1850 St. Patrick's Day celebration, many of Savannah's distinguished Irish raised toasts to "The United States of America—our adopted country, foe of Monarchy; the nurse of Liberty, the practical school of free men, and the asylum of the distressed." After a few tunes, including "Yankee Doodle," "Hail Columbia," and the "Star-Spangled Banner," Jeremiah O'Neill Sr., pastor of the Savannah Irish,

rose and stated: "May the general union of Irish hearts, of Irish hands, and Irish sentiment, which so happily greeted us this day, be as perpetual and as a divine providence will, I trust, render the confederated Union of our States."⁸⁸ In the decisive November election, Irish votes kept Savannah in the unionist camp. Through an alliance with their former Whig enemies, the Irish rallied to the Union and helped sound the death knell of secession efforts in Georgia and in the other southern states.⁸⁹

Throughout the rest of the 1850s, however, the Irish drew closer to the southern state rights position. The Know-Nothing experience drove them even closer to the Democrats than they ever had been before. The new Republican Party did not appeal to the Irish because it had absorbed much of the Know-Nothings' disdain for Catholics and immigrants.⁹⁰ Therefore, the Irish, like most southerners, saw the Democratic Party as the only protector of their rights. John Mitchel considered his support for the Democrats as "saving the South." His efforts, he felt, were zealous enough to make "a great part of the South (besides the whole North) think me mad."⁹¹

Many Americans echoed Mitchel's extreme views as the 1850s drew to a close. In Kansas, pro- and antislavery forces fought a prelude to the Civil War, while in Congress debate between northerners and southerners became increasingly bitter. When fiery abolitionist John Brown in October 1859 led an abortive attempt to take over the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and simultaneously start a slave rebellion, the divisions between North and South grew to an unprecedented level. At the trial following "John Brown's Raid," the defendant outlined an apocalyptic and bloody end to slavery. His conspiracy caused southerners to believe that if they did not receive constitutional guarantees for slavery and its expansion, they had no option but to leave the Union. They focused their anger upon the "Black Republicans," whom they saw, unjustly, as torchbearers for Brown's violent design. If Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate for president in 1860, won, then many southerners believed that secession would be the only option available to protect their slave interests.⁹²

Southern fire-eaters hoped to hasten this scenario by breaking up the one thing holding the country together—the Democratic Party. They took aim at the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois. Southerners attacked his refusal to support their demand for a federal slave code that would have been enforceable in every state and territory. When Douglas's supporters voted down a resolution at the Democratic convention in Charleston to make a federal slave code part of the party platform, many southern delegates walked out. The convention broke up without nominating a presidential

candidate, but it reconvened in Baltimore six weeks later. Again, with no desire for compromise, southern rights delegates “bolted” — this time for good. The remaining loyalists, mostly northerners, nominated Douglas. The breakaway southern delegates nominated their own southern rights Democratic candidate, John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky.⁹³

This split in the Democratic Party virtually guaranteed Lincoln’s victory in the November election. Most southerners rallied behind Breckinridge or the fourth candidate, John Bell of Tennessee, who was a Constitutional Unionist and former Whig and Know-Nothing.⁹⁴ Some, however, including Irish southerners, stayed loyal to the national Democrats and Stephen Douglas. The Irish had always depended on the Democratic Party to protect their interests. In the dark days of Know-Nothingism, the Democratic Party for the most part had stood by Irish southerners. Douglas, in particular, had campaigned hard against the nativists. Thus, the Irish were averse to deserting the party and its champion. Aided by southern friends like Alexander H. Stephens, the Irish gave Douglas the bulk of their support in the election, which Lincoln won. In New Orleans, they deserted their former ally John Slidell, who supported Breckinridge, for the “Little Giant” from Illinois. Frustrated at their desertion, Slidell declared that “the Irish” were “at heart abolitionists.”⁹⁵

Slidell was wrong. The Irish had always been proslavery, but they retained an affection for the country and the party that had given them refuge and opportunity. After this “last hurrah” for the Democrats, reality quickly set in among Irish southerners. Lincoln was president, and he and his “Black Republican” Party threatened the source of their power and status in the South — slavery. In a Charleston newspaper, the Irish Volunteers “acknowledg[ed] no superior in ardor, and loyalty of affection for the home of their choice and the birthplace of their children.” They added that they were “ready to stand by the state through every peril that may threaten her.”⁹⁶

Irish opinion in the rest of the South also moved toward support for secession. Father O’Neill, who ten years before had toasted the Union, now rallied his Savannah congregation for secession. Mobile, which had voted for Douglas in the November election, returned a 2-to-1 majority in favor of secession. It took President Lincoln’s call for 75,000 volunteers to suppress “the rebellion” in April 1861 to push the Memphis Irish to vote overwhelmingly for secession.⁹⁷ In Mississippi, the Paulding Irish swung their county’s vote toward a prosecession delegate to that state’s convention.⁹⁸ In Texas, the only southern state to put secession to a direct vote, the citizens of San Patricio and Refugio voted for it. Ireland’s six representatives at state conventions, four in Louisiana and one each in Florida and North Carolina, all supported “immediate secession.”⁹⁹

Irish southerners supported the process that South Carolinians had initiated in December 1860 and Tennessee completed in June 1861, which took eleven states out of the United States and into the Confederate States of America. The Irish supported the southern “way of life” and prepared to risk their lives for it. Their interests and southern interests had merged behind the “peculiar institution.” This merger occurred partly because slavery had provided the Irish with economic opportunity. Purchasing slaves accorded instant status, and when they could, the Irish bought them. Those who could not afford to buy a slave received higher wages doing work deemed too dangerous for chattel. Others benefitted from cotton’s rebirth in the 1850s. The resulting increase in slave prices helped drive slaves out of the cities and back to the plantations. In Charleston, the slave population dropped from over 19,000 to just under 14,000 between 1850 and 1860. In New Orleans, the slave population also dropped significantly, and although it rose slightly in Savannah and Mobile, it did not grow as fast as the white population. The famine migrants arriving in the South filled the gaps in the urban labor market caused by the increased cost of slaves. Thus, the Irish were making southern towns whiter and did not want Lincoln and the “Black Republicans” to reverse this process by abolishing slavery and adding millions of new free laborers to the southern workforce.¹⁰⁰

Other factors cemented Irish support for slavery. Irish religious leaders advocated loyalty to existing institutions and on occasion defended slavery against outside attacks. Bishop Francis Gartland of Savannah expressed this perspective best when writing to Ireland to recruit priests, warning the seminary in Dublin not to send him any clerics “manifesting more wisdom than their Church, by their intemperate and untimely zeal for the freedom of the slave population. All that we have to do is mite their souls [so that] whether bond or free they may be saved.”¹⁰¹ Opposition to slavery from family in Ireland or from political icons like Daniel O’Connell made Irishmen in the South bristle and defend their “oppressive society.” They found American liberties refreshing and saw their life in the South as much more amenable than living as “abject slaves” in Ireland.¹⁰² The South already had its slaves with and “without masters,” and therefore the Irish were not on the lowest rung of the social ladder. John Maginnis gleefully pointed out that whatever property free blacks might own, there was “one thing you know they *cannot* do[;] d—m them[,] why [they] can’t vote! Dye mind that!”¹⁰³ No matter how poor they were or how rough their work was, therefore, their white skin made the Irish automatic citizens of the ruling race and put them above the wealthiest people of color.

Irish loyalty to slavery, especially when sectional tensions increased,

brought southerners closer to the Irish. Southern rights proslavery advocates, such as James D. B. De Bow of Louisiana, considered “opposition to immigration wrong in both political policy and Christian spirit,” because it decreased the South’s white population.¹⁰⁴ When a former nemesis like Christopher Memminger recognized poor white men, including the Irish, as important members of the “peerage of white men,” it became even clearer to the Irish that slavery was vital to their position in southern society.¹⁰⁵ Thus, in 1860 and 1861, when it seemed that the “peculiar institution” was under the severest threat, most Irish came around to John Mitchel’s view that there was “a sort of parallel . . . between the condition of the Southern states and that of Ireland” and that the only solution “as in Ireland, is *Repeal of the Union*.”¹⁰⁶ This belief in the similarities they felt existed between Ireland’s and the South’s political positions was a huge turning point on their journey away from exile and toward integration, from stranger to citizen. Rather than isolating them, their concern for Ireland had brought them closer to their native neighbors. They had seen their old lives destroyed by a “foreign” government and were not going to let that happen again. They now had parallel struggles, one to be fulfilled at some stage in Ireland and one much more pressing because it was closer to home. Even though it grew ever more distant with each year that passed in the South, their memory of Ireland’s struggle also made them very realistic about their new country’s attempt at nationhood. They knew very well that southern repeal of the Union would be “baptized in blood” and could be achieved only through a “whirlwind of southern anger” and violence.¹⁰⁷

CHAPTER NINE

THE GREEN AND THE GRAY

Irish southerners rallied to the Confederate cause at the beginning of the Civil War. Irish men volunteered in droves to fight in the Confederate army and often formed their own ethnic companies. Although much smaller in total number than their compatriots who fought for the North, a greater proportion of southern Irish served in the Confederate army. These men fought in every theater of the war. Difficult in camp, they were nevertheless good fighters who impressed their native-born officers. Their memories of Britain's treatment of Ireland influenced their decision-making in the South. By volunteering for Confederate units, Irish men hoped to halt the interference of a powerful central government in their affairs. The Irish also fought because they saw themselves as adopted southerners who had to protect their homes and loved ones from "foreign" invasion. Rather than avenging the "patriots of '98" back in Ireland, they would attempt to do so fighting the "Yankee invaders" of their new homeland. As the Confederacy's fortunes worsened, however, Irish soldiers' ardor for the cause waned. Like many natives, some Irish soldiers deserted in the last stages of the war. Nevertheless, many Irish men remained faithful to the southern cause; they were ready to add a new lost cause to the one they had left behind in Ireland.

The Irish became caught up in the immediate excitement of what they and others in the South saw as the birth of a new nation. In Jackson, Mississippi, when that state passed its secession ordinance in January 1861, Harry McCarthy, a touring Irish comedian, reveled in the cause. Exhilarated by the festivity in the streets, McCarthy composed the first three verses of "The Bonnie Blue Flag," which Irish-born John Logan Power, who later served in a Mississippi regiment, published in the *Jackson Mississippian*. In New Orleans, the Irish chose the St. Patrick's Day after secession to celebrate both their heritage and their loyalty to the southern cause. They talked of the "fusion of hearts and the confusion of colors" between themselves and their southern neighbors to defeat the common Yankee threat. Prominent at "southern rights meetings," the

Irish impressed a former journalistic Know-Nothing critic as “true men of the South.”¹

In Charleston, the birthplace of secession, the local Irish took part in the “thrilling” activities of forming and defending a new government. Bishop Lynch changed the name of the *United States Catholic Miscellany* to the *Charleston Catholic Miscellany* to recognize his and his flock’s new allegiance. After secession, all the “sovereign republics” seized United States property throughout the South. In Charleston harbor, however, United States troops retained Fort Sumter, which they had occupied under cover of darkness in late December 1860. Refusing to surrender to the government of South Carolina, the commanding Union officer realized that as long as he had supplies he could remain in charge of Sumter indefinitely. During the ensuing standoff, South Carolina, and later the Confederate government, unsuccessfully tried to negotiate the fort’s surrender.²

In the interim, some of Charleston’s militia companies took turns in garrisoning nearby Fort Moultrie to prevent Union resupply of Fort Sumter. Spoiling for a fight, the military guard, which included the Irish Volunteers, attempted to convince their state politicians to allow them to seize the fort. The Irish militiamen were ready for action, the local newspaper noting that they were “among the most efficient of our companies” taking part in the “bustle and excitement” which pervaded the city.³ The Volunteers and the other militias’ services were not needed, however, because the Sumter garrison surrendered quickly after Confederate guns attacked it on 12 April 1861.⁴

After the bombardment, President Abraham Lincoln requested 75,000 volunteers to suppress the “rebellion.” Southern Irish men joined state regiments for the new Confederate army. Patrick Ronayne Cleburne, a young Irish lawyer in Helena, Arkansas, who promised to stand by his new home in “weal or woe,” joined that state’s first volunteer company. Cleburne became the most important Irish Confederate, eventually a major general, and one of only two foreign-born southerners to reach that rank.⁵ Irish levee workers in Washington County, Mississippi, “confessed a willingness to fight for the South” and wanted to enlist as soon as possible.⁶ Down the Mississippi River at Natchez, Thomas O’Hea presided over a meeting of the “Irish Southerners” in that city. This crowd of Irish men collected \$750 and appointed Mathew Carr captain of their volunteer company. The meeting members also proposed to recruit more Irish-born citizens in Adams County for the Confederate cause. Within ten days, forty-eight men had enlisted, but the company had to be disbanded because the volunteers were poor and the organizers could not support them for the several weeks before their call to active service. The ethnic company failed, but the Natchez Irish volunteered for the city’s other

companies and attended muster camp in north Mississippi in the summer of 1861.⁷

Other Irish urban pioneers, however, believing that Confederate struggles mirrored those of Ireland, created their own ethnic companies. The Mobile Irish formed the Emerald Guards and marched out of the city in their green uniforms with their banner aloft, which had the official Confederate flag on one side and a harp and wreath of shamrock prominently displayed on the other. The Irish-born bishop of Mobile, John Quinlan, an ardent “Confederate patriot,” blessed their company flag. Irish Mobilians named another company, prophetically it turned out, in honor of Robert Emmet, who had led an unsuccessful rebellion against the English forces in Ireland in the early 1800s.⁸ Vicksburg’s Irish men set up the “Sarsfield Southrons,” which they named after Patrick Sarsfield, an Irish cavalry hero who had fought against William of Orange’s Protestant invasion of Ireland in the seventeenth century. Like the Emerald Guards, the “Southrons,” led by Irish farmer Felix Hughes, used the Confederate “Stars and Bars” as its company flag. They highlighted their belief in the similarity between the Irish and southern causes with a wreath of shamrock and the Gaelic war cry, “Faugh a Ballagh” (clear the way), emblazoned on the front of their banner.⁹ Other Irish men in the South had similar sentiments.

Cutbacks in state levee funds in Louisiana just before secession and ten-dollar enlistment bounties gave the New Orleans Irish added incentive to join the Confederate army.¹⁰ Perhaps for these reasons, and for the fact that it contained the largest Irish population in the South, the Crescent City provided the greatest numbers of Irish recruits. Virtually all of the city’s volunteer regiments had Irish companies, and Irish men dominated some others, such as the Sixth Louisiana Infantry. An “Irish Brigade” also served, but it did so in the Louisiana militia and not the regular army.¹¹

Other southern cities also spawned Irish units. The Memphis-based Second Tennessee’s (Fifth Confederate) recruits came from the largely Irish Pinch district, while the Irish of Nashville and Clarksville formed the Tenth Tennessee. In Georgia, the Irish in Savannah and Augusta formed their own companies. Wilmington, North Carolina, the state’s largest center of Irish people, had an Irish company. In Virginia, Irish companies came from Alexandria and Lynchburg, and the Richmond Irish organized the First Virginia Infantry Battalion. Other Irish companies formed in east Texas. Apart from these specific Irish units, individual Irish men who could not get into an Irish company joined everything from the New Orleans Polish Brigade to the Jasper Grays of Paulding, Mississippi.¹²

Many of the South's numerous Irish boatmen signed up for the Confederate navy. These trained sailors were invaluable to the nascent southern navy because most southerners had no experience working on the high seas. Seafaring for both merchant and military ships had always been an important occupation for Irish men who wanted a better life beyond their homeland. Thus, southern ports were full of Irish sailors ready and able to serve the new Confederate navy.¹³ Other Irish men with some military experience included the prominent Irish militia units such as the Irish Volunteers and Meagher Guards of Charleston and the Jasper Greens of Savannah, who transferred directly into the Confederate army.¹⁴ Patrick Cleburne had spent three years in the British army, but most Irish men had never before been soldiers; their only fighting experience consisted of brawls in the streets of New Orleans or Memphis.¹⁵ Irish men would have to learn how to fight in the heat of battle.

When the United States Army finally organized "Lincoln's volunteers" in the summer of 1861, many northern newspapers called for the capture of the Confederate capital, located ninety miles to the south of Washington, D.C. Hoping for a quick end to the war, they raised the cry, "On to Richmond." Responding to the growing public clamor, northern troops moved into Virginia in July and provided the first serious threat to the Confederacy's survival. The Old Dominion would remain a major focus for both sides for the duration of the war.¹⁶ The first Irish Confederate units sent there to defend it from Yankee invasion, however, caused much consternation. The citizens of Richmond dreaded the arrival of the infamous Louisiana "Tiger" regiments with their many Irish members. One observer who saw the Tiger volunteers in their muster camp in Louisiana noticed the large Irish presence and described the recruits as "cotton handling Milesian volunteers."¹⁷ The Fourteenth Louisiana had precipitated a riot in Grand Junction, Tennessee, which the commanding officer quelled by killing seven of the volunteers and wounding nineteen more.¹⁸ Seville Putnam, a resident of Richmond during the Civil War, remarked that the Tigers "roamed about the city like a pack of untamed wildcats."¹⁹

Irish acts of heroism, however, mitigated greatly their reputation for rowdiness. Indeed, many of their performances under fire on behalf of their new country are remarkable considering their recent arrival in the South. The Irish Tigers, for example, restored their reputation in 1862. In May of that year most of the Irish Tigers were in the Shenandoah Valley under the command of General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Taking part in one of the most famous campaigns of the war, Irish Louisianians were a valuable part of Jackson's "foot cavalry." Their brigade commander, General Richard Taylor, a former Know-Nothing, described one

Irish regiment as “stout, hardy fellows, turbulent in camp and requiring a strong hand.” In spite of these control problems, Taylor believed that these “hardy” Irish men when treated with “kindness and justice [were] ready to follow their officers to the death.”²⁰

On 1 June 1862, Taylor’s Irish soldiers proved their mettle. Jackson’s troops made an exhausting march in the May heat to Strasburg, Virginia, to avoid the entrapment of the Federal forces in the Shenandoah Valley. Shortly thereafter, sporadic Union cavalry attacks caused them to panic. Taylor and the Irish Louisianians helped restore calm by providing rear guard action to halt the Union forays.²¹ Having restored order, the Irish men refused relief from post duty for that night. Despite atrocious weather that produced “hailstones as large as hen eggs” and despite continuous skirmishing artillery fire, they cried: “We are the boys to see it out.” This loud assurance “from half a hundred Tipperary throats” made General Taylor, in praise of his Irish troops, remark, “my heart has warmed to an Irishman since that night.”²²

When Confederate authorities transferred General Taylor to the Trans-Mississippi Department, the Irish Louisianians lost their greatest supporter. Yet they continued to impress native-born Confederates with their fighting abilities. Captain William J. Seymour was impressed while observing a group from the Irish Sixth move into position near the Rappahannock River in April 1863. The Irish Louisianians went through a “galling fire” poured on them “from the hills on the other side of the River,” but they carried out their orders. They managed to get to their designated position and, in the process, “caused many a Yankee to bite the dust.” The Union soldiers, however, had crossed the river in “pontoons and boats” and flanked the Confederate regiment. The Irish boys were forced to retreat, but their actions, which cost them eighty-nine casualties, made Seymour describe them as “noble fellows [who] strove manfully to hold their positions.”²³

Less turbulent Irish men, members of the Davis Guards from Galveston, also performed well under pressure. Led by Lieutenant, later Captain, Dick Dowling, the Guards served at the Sabine Pass on the east Texas Gulf Coast. Dowling and his men helped clear a Union blockade of the Sabine Pass in March 1863.²⁴ Later that year, President Jefferson Davis gave these Irish men medals for their bravery. Commanding officers’ commendations in official reports were usually the highest honor for Confederate soldiers, but the Irish Texans’ courage deserved special recognition. In early September, when 5,000 Union troops attempted to invade Texas through the Sabine Pass, the Davis Guards, officially known as Company F of the First Texas Heavy Artillery, halted the Union advance.²⁵ Hoping to fulfill President Lincoln’s desire to capture Texas,

Union military planners intended to put a sizable force ashore at the sparsely defended Sabine Pass. The invasion force would then quickly take over nearby Beaumont, an important railway junction and the key to east Texas. From Beaumont the Union invaders could travel rapidly by rail to Houston and Galveston and take the Confederate forces there by surprise. Once in control of these two cities, the largest in Texas, the northern commanders believed the rest of the state would fall easily.²⁶

The plan was a good one, but Dick Dowling and his Irish unit in Fort Griffin at the mouth of the pass destroyed it. On the night before the planned invasion, a Confederate guard observed major Union ship signal activity just offshore and informed Dowling. Realizing that a Union attack was imminent, the Irish commander wired General Magruder for instructions. Magruder advised Dowling to spike his guns and abandon his position. Dowling, however, decided to stay and fight. He ordered his Irish artillerymen to build up the fort's earthworks in preparation for battle. The first Union ships to steam into the pass met a fierce artillery barrage from the Davis Guards. With five cannons they fired 107 shots in thirty-five minutes, an extraordinary rate for heavy artillery, and quickly disabled two Union ships. The Irish troops' accuracy and speed compelled the remaining Union ships to abandon the invasion. Thus, forty Irish artillerymen captured 400 prisoners and two gunboats and drove three other gunboats and twenty-two steam transports back into the Gulf of Mexico.²⁷ In his official report, Lieutenant Dowling stated: "All my men behaved like heroes; not a man flinched from his post. Our motto was 'victory or death.'"²⁸

Other observers were equally impressed. The Confederate marine commander for Texas, Major Leon Smith, who witnessed the terrific naval bombardment that rained down on the Irish gunners in Fort Griffin, remarked: "The Davis Guards one and all, God bless them. The honor of the country was in their hands, and they nobly sustained it."²⁹ Despite the heavy bombardment and the amount of shell and shot the enemy fired at them, the Guards amazingly suffered no casualties. The sight of forty men turning back 5,000 troops made General Magruder exclaim: "This seems to me to be the most extraordinary feat of the war."³⁰ When news of the Davis Guards' victory reached London, Confederate bond prices jumped three points. Coming just two months after the disastrous defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, the actions of Dowling and his men were a great morale booster for the Confederacy. Thus, for their bravery and for their positive effects on bonds and morale, the Davis Guards and their commander received the personal congratulations of the Confederate Congress and medals from President Davis.³¹

Besides Irish units, individual Irish Confederates also performed acts



Captain Felix Hughes,
“Sarsfield Southrons” (Old
Courthouse Museum,
Vicksburg, Miss.)

of conspicuous valor. Felix Hughes, the organizer of the Sarsfield Southrons in April 1861, when commanding the Twenty-second Mississippi infantry regiment, led his men forward “in fine style” in an attack on Union forces at Greenwell Springs Road during the August 1862 Battle of Baton Rouge. One observer stated that Hughes had “acted gallantly all through the engagements.”³² Hughes’s heroism cost him his life. Nevertheless, General John C. Breckinridge welcomed Hughes’s valor, because it helped his own reputation as a general. Many Confederates had worried that Breckinridge, a prewar politician who ran for the presidency of the United States in 1860, would not be a good commander, but the performance of Hughes and others at Baton Rouge eased those fears. Breckinridge showed that he could motivate troops and win on the battlefield.³³

Unlike Dowling and Hughes, the First Virginia “Irish” Battalion did little to enhance the reputation of Irish Confederates. On one occasion, their performance threatened the dominant image of Irish courage. Recruited in Richmond, the battalion fought effectively in the Shenandoah Valley campaign and was part of Colonel T. S. Garnett’s brigade at the Battle of Cedar Mountain in mid-August 1862. When the battalion came under a strong cavalry attack, almost every man turned and fled.³⁴ A few officers tried to halt this hasty “retreat,” but they failed. The Irish men

eventually stopped running far behind the Confederate lines, where their officers managed to rally them to act as a reserve for the remainder of the day.³⁵

The First Virginia's cowardly actions were unusual for Irish troops and indeed unusual for the battalion. The incident did not detract from their reputation for long, and perhaps their behavior may have had to do with failed leadership rather than inherent cowardice. By 1863 the Irish Virginians had restored their reputation enough to become Stonewall Jackson's provost guard.³⁶ Their rehabilitation probably reflected the changing attitudes toward courage among soldiers on both sides. At the beginning of the war, most units, including the Irish companies with their Gaelic war cries emblazoned on their flags, saw unconditional bravery as the only honorable course for a soldier. The realities of ignominious death from disease or from charging across open fields at the enemy's lines quickly altered this belief. Many battle-hardened troops realized that war was not glamorous, but monotonous, dangerous, and occasionally horrifying. Thus, they became more understanding of their comrades' moments of weakness. Many soldiers realized that one day they, too, could lose their courage and flee from the enemy.³⁷

In general, however, Irish Confederates retained their great reputation for bravery throughout the war. Nevertheless, they also had the name of troublemakers, and Richard Taylor's comment about their needing a "firm hand" was appropriate. Alcohol played a significant role in the Irish soldier's life. Along with religion and letters from home, it provided escape from the boredom and horrors of war. For example, the Irish of the Tenth Tennessee had eagerly signed up for action, but when Confederate authorities posted them to Fort Henry on the Tennessee River in 1861, they quickly became bored. Drinking became the only joy for them mired, as they were, in a constant routine of digging, construction work, and guard duty. On a grueling march through Mississippi the following year, many of the same Irish Tennesseans, in search of relief from sickness and fatigue, turned to whiskey. Their commander threatened one soldier with court-martial for going on an "alcohol expedition" without permission. The officer, however, never filed charges against the errant Irishman, perhaps believing that drink helped his men face battle.³⁸

Most Union and Confederate commanders, however, did not have a benign view of alcohol use among their soldiers. As early as the Battle of First Manassas in July 1861, Confederate commanders worried about alcohol abuse among their soldiers. Despite a decline in liquor distillation, Confederate soldiers still consumed vast amounts of bootleg spirits, often going to extraordinary lengths to avoid the antialcohol orders of their officers. One Irishman in the Second Tennessee, for example, went

as far as to put whiskey down the barrel of his gun to avoid confiscation of his booze.³⁹

Such a tale may be amusing, but drunkenness among Confederate soldiers caused many headaches for their officers. William J. Seymour had the unenviable task of controlling a company of Irish Louisianians. On the march toward Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in late June 1863, Seymour's men had "too free access to liquor" and slowed down the movement of the whole regiment. The sly captain solved his problem by putting the drunken stragglers in the cooking utensils wagons. Their long, rough ride through the Pennsylvania countryside soon sobered them up.⁴⁰

Gambling was also a problem in Confederate units. "Lacking race-horses, cards, dice, or other facilities," one historian has written, "chance-loving Rebs would readily find a way to diminish or increase their holdings."⁴¹ Father James Sheeran, the Irish Confederate chaplain of the Louisiana Tigers, banned gambling among "his boys." On one occasion he disrupted a card game and seized sixty dollars. The gamblers sullenly accepted Father Sheeran's "appropriation," and the priest duly gave the money to St. Joseph's Orphanage in Richmond, Virginia.⁴²

Sheeran and other Confederate chaplains did more than just discourage the Irish soldiers' vices. Through their religious services, they also provided comfort for them. Attending Mass or service and receiving the Blessed Sacrament became even more important for Irish Catholics in wartime than it was in peace. Religion was one of the few consolations for every Confederate soldier at the front. As the war dragged into 1863 and losses increased, religious revivals "swept periodically over Confederate encampments." These revivals reinforced discipline by giving confidence to the common soldiers before they entered battle. Evangelical preachers also helped the soldiers justify the cause they fought for by legitimating the Confederate effort as the will of God.⁴³ Protestant Irish troops were not immune to this kind of preaching. In Richmond, for example, an Irish North Carolinian enjoyed the sermon of one "Dr. Hoge" who packed his church every Sunday with servicemen eager to hear him. He hoped that Hoge would become an army chaplain, because he gave the young soldier confidence in his salvation and he was a better preacher than the chaplains already in the service.⁴⁴

Irish Catholic soldiers also responded to hard-working chaplains. Father Sheeran, pastor to the Louisiana Irish, delighted in their piety.⁴⁵ In 1862, the Nashville Irish in the Tenth Tennessee sought solace in the Mass before an imminent attack on their untenable position in Fort Henry on the Tennessee River.⁴⁶ In 1864, near Dalton, Georgia, the serenity of Catholic Confederates at Mass impressed one officer. He wrote in his diary, "It was indeed novel to see candles burning in daylight in

the wild forest, while the worshippers bowed before God and reverently crossed themselves.”⁴⁷ Although often rough and mean in battle and camp, Irish Confederates, it seemed, were on their best behavior at Mass.

Yet the consolations of alcohol and religion were not enough to keep large numbers of Irish soldiers dedicated to the Confederate cause. Irish units suffered from high desertion rates. Assessing desertion rates is very difficult because most Confederate muster rolls and duty rosters are incomplete. However, thanks to extant muster rolls, a relatively comprehensive study of desertion rates has been published on Louisiana regiments in the Army of Northern Virginia. It indicates that Irish soldiers deserted more often than their native-born colleagues. The Irish Sixth Louisiana, which General Richard Taylor had admired so much, had a desertion rate of 27 percent. One company of Irish and Germans in the Fifth Louisiana had a rate of 39 percent. The Emerald Guards from Mobile, whose muster rolls are very complete, had a 19 percent desertion rate, which was high when compared with a native-born company in the same regiment that had a rate of only 3 percent. The “distinction” of being the worst Louisiana company in Virginia did not belong to the Irish, however, but to the predominantly German Pemberton Rifles, which had a phenomenal 41 percent desertion rate.⁴⁸

Not every Irish unit, however, experienced mounting desertion rates. For example, the majority-Irish Montgomery Guards of the First Louisiana had a small rate — only 10 percent. This unit may have been unique, however, because as the war progressed into its third year and defeats mounted, desertion became a serious problem for every Confederate company, foreign- or native-born. Thus, desertion was not just an Irish phenomenon. After General William T. Sherman’s capture of Atlanta in 1864, President Davis worried that “two-thirds of our men are absent . . . most of them without leave.” Some southern soldiers now talked openly of deserting. Therefore, Irish deserters made up just a small percentage of the total number of Confederate deserters.⁴⁹ Even Union soldiers, whose belief in their cause increased as the war went on, suffered from combat fatigue. In 1864, over 100,000 soldiers in blue declined to re-enlist at the end of their three-year service and went home.⁵⁰

Therefore, as with cowardice, soldiers began to see desertion differently as the war progressed. Officers could resign, but enlisted men could not. Thus, many just left without permission. Many “deserters,” in fact, were often just “absent” without leave rather than on the side of the enemy. A yearning for home, rather than conscious insubordination, caused soldiers to desert. In 1862 one officer in the Army of Tennessee saw a company of Irish men leave their camp without permission. They were not, however, “going over to the enemy, but merely attempting to

make their own way home under the plea that their time was out.”⁵¹ Some of the Louisiana men in the Army of Northern Virginia who had been “AWOL” reentered Confederate service in the Trans-Mississippi West. Muster rolls for other Irish companies reveal that many “deserters” were just absent without leave and often returned to service.⁵²

Those who deserted to the other side, however, could expect serious repercussions if caught. This form of desertion was much more serious than “absent without leave.” Irish soldiers did not have much sympathy for “turncoats.” For example, in late 1863, a group of soldiers from the Sixth Louisiana captured a former comrade who had deserted and joined the Federal army. They turned him in for court-martial, and the errant Confederate was sentenced “to ‘be shot with musketry.’” Prior to his execution, the prisoner seemed calm while a priest heard his last confession. Before his former comrades executed him, however, he stated that “he had never pulled a trigger against his old comrades” and “had resolved not to do so” since his enlistment in the Union army. Despite his testimony, the firing squad put nine bullets in his head and one in his heart.⁵³

Thus, through stiff discipline Irish men in gray retained their reputation. In general, the Irish in Confederate service were noted for their fighting prowess. Those same Irish Louisiana companies in the Army of Northern Virginia with the high desertion rates also had the highest casualty rates.⁵⁴ Until the end of the war, southern authorities saw Irish soldiers as valuable to the Confederate cause. For example, in January 1865, when the Confederate armies were desperately short of men, the War Department tried to recruit Union prisoners to Confederate service. The department advised that the “Catholic Irish be preferred” when it came to choosing recruits, because with the right training they could become “faithful soldiers.” Other foreigners were the next-best potential recruits, but the Irish remained the first choice.⁵⁵

Irish men were considered more loyal than other foreigners, particularly Germans. Southerners feared Germans as closet abolitionists and persecuted them on numerous occasions. Many Germans in the South had fled the backlash of the 1848 revolutions in their homelands, and, imbued with a belief in liberty and equality, these political refugees had always disliked slavery. Many Texas Germans, in particular, refused to support the Confederacy and openly cheered for the Union. Some of them formed “Loyal Texas” militias and joined Union regiments.⁵⁶

Native southerners did not put Irish soldiers in the same category with the Germans. The performance of Irish generals and staff officers helped enhance the view of the Irish as more patriotic than other foreigners in the South. Patrick Cleburne, the “Stonewall of the West,” played a major

role in this enhancement of Irish reputations. Pat Cleburne had enlisted as a private, but his company soon elected him captain. By December 1862, he had been promoted to major general and had been given a division in General William J. Hardee's corps in the Army of Tennessee. Among his division were large numbers of Irish soldiers from Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. He made it "a model of discipline" while maintaining its loyalty and love. Cleburne and his division had their finest hour at the Battle of Missionary Ridge on the Tennessee-Georgia border in 1863. While other Confederate forces fell easily to Union attacks, Cleburne's troops held their ground and formed a rear guard to protect the rest of the fleeing Confederate forces. Because these actions were the only bright spot in the disastrous rout near Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Confederate Congress commended Cleburne and his division for saving the remnants of the Army of Tennessee.⁵⁷

Cleburne believed strongly in the Confederate cause. Like the Irish in his division, he was acutely aware of the similarities between Ireland and the Confederacy. A Protestant, he had served in the British army during the Great Famine and spent most of his time defending landlords and their agents from the starving Irish. His career of enforcing British imperialism had not been an enjoyable one, and it had only made him aware "how artificial barriers could kill ambition." His stultifying youth in Ireland contrasted sharply with the success of his life in the South. Thus, when he believed northern aggression threatened to turn his future into his past and bring about the "lingering dissolution" he had seen in Ireland, he became an ardent Confederate.⁵⁸

This fear of the South's becoming a colony made Cleburne treasure "independence above *every other earthly consideration* [his emphasis]." When the Confederacy's prospects looked dire in 1864, he even advocated the recruiting of slaves into the Confederate army. He believed that young male slaves should be offered their emancipation in return for Confederate military service. Southern nationhood mattered more to him than personal property. He had never been a strong advocate of slavery, although he had never opposed its existence. His business dealings in prewar Arkansas had not involved him in slavery, and as far as we know he never expressed an opinion on it to his family members in Ireland and America. Thus, he never realized how essential slavery was to Confederate ideology. He felt that sacrificing human property to the cause was just like all the other sacrifices Confederate soldiers and citizens had made to achieve independence. Unfortunately for Cleburne, his opinion was incongruous with those of most other southerners. His loyal supporters in the Army of Tennessee thought his idea naive at best, while his commander, General Braxton Bragg, considered it dangerous



Major General Patrick
Ronayne Cleburne, CSA
(LC-USZ62-107446,
Library of Congress,
Washington, D.C.)

and Cleburne an “agitator” who had to be watched.⁵⁹ Cleburne’s idea also was out of step with that of most Irish men in gray. They strongly supported slavery, because, unlike the lawyer from Helena, their place in southern society depended on slavery’s existence.

Despite all the skepticism, Cleburne’s proposal made it to President Jefferson Davis’s desk. The president rejected it immediately, and it may have cost Cleburne command of the Army of Tennessee when the government removed General Joseph Johnston in July 1864.⁶⁰ Cleburne remained a division commander, but he continued to perform well. On 30 November 1864, leading a frontal assault that John Bell Hood had ordered and Cleburne feared was hopeless, Pat Cleburne fell to a “Yankee” bullet at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee. The scholars of the battle wrote of him: “For one such as Cleburne the troops had more a feeling of idolatry. Patrick Cleburne was the idol of his division, and perhaps the entire army as well.”⁶¹ Unfortunately for Cleburne, important superiors did not feel the same way. His plan to arm the slaves cost him higher command and perhaps his life as well.

Although not as important as Cleburne, Brigadier General Joseph

Finegan, an Irishman from Florida, also distinguished himself as a military commander. Having spent most of the war in Florida and attaining a mixed record, he and his brigade were called to Virginia in late 1864 to help defend Richmond against the forces of General Ulysses S. Grant.⁶² Finegan and his men arrived in Virginia just in time for the Battle of Cold Harbor. During the first brutal Union assault, Finegan and his men, as General Robert E. Lee put it, “immediately drove the enemy out with severe losses.”⁶³ The bravery of Finegan and his men was foolhardy but it impressed other observers. Captain William Seymour, for example, saw Finegan and his men, along with the Maryland Battalion, recapture lost Confederate positions and keep those positions as “in vain did the Yankees strive to drive Finegan out until convinced by his sturdy resistance . . . they fell back.”⁶⁴

In addition to performing effectively on the battlefield, Irish Confederate officers carried out valuable tasks in other important areas. Colonel William Browne was a trusted member of President Davis’s personal staff. Perhaps the “greatest intellect near the president,” this “jovial” Irishman performed many tasks for the president, including visiting the various fronts to assess morale and strength. In 1862, when Union troops threatened Richmond, Davis sent his family out of the capital and entrusted Browne with taking care of their provisions and lodgings in Raleigh, North Carolina. In difficult times, Browne kept the president’s wife, Varina, amused with his “wit and Irish brogue.” Along with aiding the president in personal matters, Browne also helped him by acting as an intermediary with the Confederate Congress. Toward the end of the war, Davis depended on Browne for reports from the front. He also sent the Irishman on missions to raise troops for the beleaguered cause.⁶⁵ Colonel John Logan Power of Jackson, Mississippi, survived the siege of Vicksburg in 1863 to become the public relations officer of the Mississippi regiments in the Army of Northern Virginia. Through his newspaper articles, he kept Mississippians abreast of their boys’ actions at the front.⁶⁶ Officers like Captain John Connelly and Colonel Patrick F. Moore served on brigade and corps staffs.⁶⁷

Overall, therefore, Irish soldiers’ positive contributions outweighed their negative actions. John Mitchel estimated that about 40,000 Irish men fought for the Confederacy. This number is certainly too high. However, if one even halves that number to a more plausible 20,000, the comparison of this number to the Irish population in the eleven Confederate states as recorded in 1860 shows that around 70 percent of able-bodied Irish men served in the Confederate armed forces.⁶⁸ The evidence suggests that only a small number of them chose the option of leaving the South or claiming exemption because of foreign nationality.⁶⁹

Although the number of southern Irish serving was much smaller than that of the Irish in the Union armies, which is estimated to have been in the hundreds of thousands, the Irish in the South were not underrepresented in their army.⁷⁰ The southern Irish also had influence beyond their total number. There is no doubt that the Davis Guards prevented the invasion of Texas and that Pat Cleburne's command at Missionary Ridge saved the Army of Tennessee. Irish soldiers may have provided many headaches for Confederate officers, but on the whole they performed effectively and gallantly in battle. Even in the most troubled times, Irish Confederates could zealously defend the southern cause. Chaplain Sheeran constantly argued for the South when he tended to Union casualties.⁷¹ As Vicksburg surrendered, John Logan Power wrote: "O Heaven, save us from the disaster and the humiliation of defeat." John Patten, a young Irish soldier in a Louisiana regiment stationed in Mobile, wrote in 1864: "I hope we will whip the Yankees badly in Georgia and Virginia." In 1865, he still hoped for "peace *with honor*."⁷²

The Irish contributed beyond their small numbers because they believed in the southern cause. They echoed the parallels between Ireland's situation with Britain and the South's problems with the United States. Because they also saw the abolition of slavery as detrimental to the cause of the Irish in America, they had no qualms about fighting to preserve the "peculiar institution." John Mitchel summed up the idea of the parallel struggles when he wrote in an Irish newspaper that those who thought "that the repeal of one union in Europe [the union between Great Britain and Ireland] depends on the enforcement of another union in America" were mistaken, and "our friends here [Confederates] do not well understand the process of reasoning which leads to the conclusion nor do I."⁷³

Of course, the Irish in the North saw parallels between their fight for the Union and Ireland's fight against Britain. They hoped that a strong United States would be a rival to Great Britain and eventually help the cause of Irish freedom. Fenians encouraged Irish men to join the Union army to gain military training for the next fight to free Ireland. They believed that Britain, therefore, had encouraged secession and the Confederacy to destroy a potential rival.⁷⁴ This idea did not play well among Irish southerners. They could not understand it and did not have Fenian organizers to counter Mitchel's logic. Thus, Irish southerners could believe that the Irish in the North were led by Thomas Francis Meagher of the Union Irish Brigade, "a wretched half Catholic whose greatest distinction has been acquired in libelling [*sic*] their clergy, and in throwing slurs at their creed." A writer for the pro-Union Catholic *Boston Pilot* was neither "Irish" nor "American," because in opposing secession he did

not have “the least idea of American citizenship or of the American Constitution.” This virulent rhetoric influenced the boys who were heading for the front. While Irish Confederate troops did on occasion show compassion for their fellow countrymen in blue, a British observer with the Army of Northern Virginia noted that “Southern Irishmen make excellent ‘Rebs,’ and have no sort of scruple in killing as many of their northern brethren as they possibly can.”⁷⁵ The growing anti-British sentiment in the South made one correspondent state that “the hatred expressed against England makes it far from pleasant to be known here as a British subject.” Such sentiment eventually led to the expulsion of a number of British consuls from the Confederacy, and it only reinforced the southern Irish dismissal of the northern Irish argument.⁷⁶

Thus, many other Irish in the South echoed John Mitchel’s sentiments that southern struggle was linked to Irish struggles both in Ireland and America. Bishop Lynch of Charleston waged a war of words with his Catholic colleagues in the North over the rightness of the Confederate cause. A North Carolina Irish man who identified himself only as “E. G.” hoped that “an over-ruling Providence [would] save” his fellow Irish men in the North “from the guilt of raising their hands against the Southern people.” He, like Mitchel, wondered how “the Irish Catholics of the North side by side with the black-hearted Puritan, the enemy of their race and creed,” could oppose the South’s attempt “to withdraw from the Union.” Captain John Dooley of the First Virginia Regiment, son of the Richmond merchant of the same name, having been wounded and captured in Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg, wrote in his journal: “Read today of fearful cruelties perpetuated by the English soldiers in ’98 [1798] upon the Irish. Their fiendish acts upon defenseless people we find sometimes paralleled by the infamous brutalities of the Yankee mercenaries of the present day.”⁷⁷ Father Abram Ryan, the “poet-priest of the Confederacy,” wrote about not only the South’s struggle for independence but also Ireland’s.⁷⁸ John Mitchel’s son, who served in a South Carolina artillery unit, expressed this idea of the dual struggle best. According to the men who nursed him when a Union shell mortally wounded him, John Mitchel Jr., with a hint of melancholy, exclaimed: “I die willingly for the South, but oh! that it had been for Ireland.”⁷⁹

Perhaps more important than ideology, the southern Irish fought for “home.” Home had been Ireland, but the South was now their new home. One James Real of Memphis, for example, who eventually was killed at the Battle of Shiloh, joined a Tennessee regiment to fight for the Confederacy even though most of his relatives lived in Illinois.⁸⁰ Irish immigrants had prospered in the region beyond any success they could have achieved in Ireland. They had put down roots in the South and were

proud of their ethnic neighborhoods, fraternal societies, and church. They were not going to let the “Yankees” or their fellow Irish in the North destroy all they had achieved for themselves, their families, and their neighbors.

One Irish Mississippian’s reaction to the arrival of northern troops highlights his fellow countrymen’s desire to protect their new homes. Patrick Murphy, who had gone from artisan to builder and slaveholder during his life in the South, was no rabid secessionist. In fact, he regretted the South’s dissolution of its bonds with the United States. Nevertheless, when news arrived of Union “Gun boats” with “10,000 men” ready to invade the Confederacy, he wrote in his diary that “I will go now where I am wanted . . . to help beat back the cursed Yankees.” Sure that he would “stop a bullet somewhere,” he survived the war in a Union prison camp. Despite the many hardships he endured there, he did not betray his oath to the Confederacy.⁸¹

This love of a new home and the will to defend its honor were Irish soldiers’ primary motives. The urge to make a living could not alone account for the many achievements of the Irish men in gray. Belief in home and in the cause of the South made them carry out their duty as best they could and made their small numbers pale beside their extraordinary service for the Confederacy. Their performance, however, depended greatly on the attitudes of their family members and Irish neighbors left at home. The support of Irish Confederate civilians for the southern cause accounts for many of the Irish achievements in battle, but its waning also explains the Irish units’ numerous desertions. When Irish civilians lost the desire to continue the fight against “Yankee oppression,” many Irish soldiers lost it too.

CHAPTER TEN

IRISH CONFEDERATES

Irish civilians in the Confederacy sustained the Irish men in gray. Caught up in the excitement of secession and the coming war, their support for the Confederacy augmented Irish decisions to join the army. They helped prepare the boys for the front and continued to support them when they got there. Irish civilians and Irish men in uniform shared the same reasons for supporting the Confederacy. Civilians, too, saw northern victory as detrimental to their status and southern success as the only way to protect it. They did not want northern troops marching down their streets any more than native southerners did. Memories of British occupation of Ireland enhanced Irish southerners' desire for a Confederate victory. As the war progressed, however, Irish civilians lost much of their enthusiasm for the Confederate cause. The hardships associated with the Union blockade of southern ports, the loss of family breadwinners to the Confederate armies, and Union invasion made Irish southerners war-weary. Like large numbers of their native neighbors, they lost the "will" to resist Yankee occupation. Some welcomed northern occupation because it meant an end to the harsh conditions of war. This loss of will among Irish civilians affected Irish men at the front and encouraged their desertion from the army. Irish southerners' loss of faith in their new country, however, was merely indicative of the Confederacy as a whole. It ultimately prepared Irish civilians and Irish men in gray for the reassertion of Federal control at the end of the war.

John McFarland, who did not serve but supported the Confederate cause financially, in late 1860 provided an eloquent statement that could easily have represented the views of his countrymen as the United States slid toward civil war. A native of Strabane, County Tyrone, he came to America in 1839 and settled in Yazoo City, Mississippi. His involvement in the cotton business brought him to New Orleans, where he prospered. Contented with his life in the South, he expressed fear about the coming war, but concluded:

myself, [and] my destiny . . . were cast in the South 21 years ago. I came to it a stranger and penniless youth. I was taken by the hand by southerners, they have been kind to me. I have prospered beyond my expectations. My affections, my family, my home, are all here and whatever the fortunes of my adopted country mine rises or falls with it, in the South I have made the money that I am ready to offer up as well as my own arms to defend her honor and her rights.¹

McFarland, like many other Catholic Irish immigrants, recognized how his life had improved after coming to the South. Southerners had welcomed and provided him with prosperity beyond his wildest dreams and, more important, had given him a chance to build a new home for himself. He had come a long way from being a “penniless youth” and was prepared to defend his position in southern society.

Undoubtedly, McFarland was influenced by his immigration experience. He had left Ireland poor and was very aware of the contrast between his life in the South and what it could have been had he stayed in British-controlled Ireland. He wrote to his friends and family in County Tyrone, Ireland, defending the South and hoping that “my countrymen in Ireland would fully inform themselves on these questions [the reasons for secession], before they exported themselves so freely, in the army of which they are but an exhibit of profound ignorance of the question at issue.” He saw with great clarity the parallels between Ireland’s desire to secede from the United Kingdom and the South’s desire to secede from the United States and hoped that his fellow countrymen would see likewise.²

Other Irish southerners shared McFarland’s sentiments. In an open letter to Thomas Francis Meagher of the Federal Irish Brigade, Thomas McMahon of Charleston wondered if the Irish hero of 1848 was “blind to the singular inconsistency” of himself being an “Irish refugee, who in the sacred cause of Ireland’s injured rights, rebelled against England’s tyranny and oppression on the motherland—but now buckles on the armor of Exeter Hall’s fanaticism to strike down the liberties of a people contending only for the inalienable privileges of self-government.” McMahon’s fellow countrymen in the Charleston Hibernian Society had Meagher’s name “unanimously stricken from the roll of the honorary members of the society.”³ The general Irish population in Charleston agreed with the more prosperous Hibernians’ sentiments. In the summer of 1861, in a scene reminiscent of the troubles in Ireland, Confederate troops had “to fix bayonets” to stop the local Irish citizenry from attacking a load of Irish Union prisoners recently captured at the First Battle of

Manassas. Irish Charlestonians saw the unfortunate prisoners as traitors, perhaps similar in their minds to Irish collaborators with British rule in Ireland, and wanted to mete out their own justice. Unable to get their hands on their fellow countrymen, the Irish crowd “occupied high vantage ground, properly equipped with large stones” to hail down on the unfortunate Irish in blue.⁴

Irish civilian support for the southern cause was, however, often expressed in more positive terms. The Savannah Hibernians celebrated St. Patrick’s Day 1861 with toasts to Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Constitution as well as to John Mitchel. They also toasted their fellow countrymen, many of whom were at the celebration, preparing to fight for the cause. President D. A. O’Byrne, whose father was from County Mayo, toasted “Irishmen—Ever ready to meet a foreign foe.”⁵ Apparently, in Savannah it was the northerners—not the Irish—who were “foreign.” Later that year, Father O’Neill Sr. collected a sizable \$193.45 from his congregation at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist for the Confederate treasury. After observing an official “day of humiliation and prayer” and asking God “to bestow his blessing on Southern efforts, now being made to establish those just and constitutional rights, against the infringement and invasion of those rights by Northern ill-advised, and therefore, deluded enemies,” O’Neill organized the collection among his predominantly Irish parishioners. Confederate secretary of the treasury Christopher Memminger, who had once seriously questioned the loyalty of Irish Catholics to the South, replied that he saw their contribution as further “evidence of the earnest and settled purpose of the community” to help the troops at the front.⁶

There were individual efforts as well. Out of his “love for Yazoo and desire for furtherance of the cause,” for example, John McFarland became the unofficial sponsor of the Yazoo Rifles who were stationed at Pensacola, Florida. McFarland sent money and clothes to the company; his wife made them a flag. The Yazoo boys were so grateful for McFarland’s help they renamed their company the “McFarland Rifles.” The Irishman responded, “I cannot convey to you in words what I feel for this high compliment coming from such a source.”⁷ McFarland also helped the Confederate cause by providing his cotton clients in Liverpool, England, with long defenses of the southern cause, hoping to get them published in the *Times*.⁸

Other Irish civilians lent similar support to the cause. Too old to serve in a Mississippi unit, P. H. McGraw, a Natchez druggist, tried to smuggle morphine, chloroform, and quinine through Union lines to Natchez. Quinine, vital for alleviating the effects of malaria, was in desperate shortage because of the Union blockade. Northern authorities also placed it

on the contraband list, meaning that Federal troops could seize any quinine bound for Confederate civilians.⁹ The lack of this drug created severe hardship for many southerners, but McGraw made several dangerous trips through Union lines to get it. On one occasion he had a "hairbreadth escape through one of the deep bayous, which encircles Natchez . . . in a buggy loaded to the guards with an ample supply of Quinine, then worth five dollars an ounce in gold."¹⁰

One P. Murphy of San Antonio, who had settled in Texas after fighting in the Mexican War, was young enough to serve in the army. In October 1864, however, he received a permanent discharge from Confederate service because of his "indigestion, flatulence, vertigo, prostration and emaciation." His discharge did not hinder further noncombatant service. He continued to help the cause by smuggling cotton out of Texas to Mexico, and from there to Great Britain, to earn much-needed hard currency for the Confederacy.¹¹

In Charleston, John Knox also participated in blockade-running activities. Knox, who had with great melancholy left his Presbyterian brethren in Armagh in 1850, had settled well in the South by the time the war began. He prospered and invested thousands of dollars in Confederate blockade-running companies like the Palmetto Exporting and Importing Company and the Atlantic Steam Packet Company of the Confederate States, which ran cotton to the British-owned Bahama Islands and brought European goods back to Charleston.¹² Knox's investment was important to the Confederate war effort.

Motivated by a mixture of "patriotism and profit," Charlestonians' blockade-running was vital to the Confederacy's survival. The vast majority of goods smuggled into the South came through the South Carolina port. One British merchant who did business with the Confederate States believed that Europeans would see the city's capture "as a death blow to the rebellion." Nevertheless, the Confederate Subsistence Bureau was certainly appreciative of Charleston's citizenry, primarily because companies like the Palmetto Exporting and Importing Company imported a vast amount of goods. For example, between March and September 1864, when the Union blockade was at its height, the bureau managed to attain from Europe 26,700 rifles, 1 million pounds of saltpeter, 3,500 pigs of lead, 290,000 pairs of shoes, and 275,000 blankets, most of which came through Charleston.¹³

Patriotism, more than profit, probably motivated Knox because he continued investing in blockade-running late in the war. In 1864 the Confederate government had virtually taken total control of blockade-running and thus profiteering had become difficult.¹⁴ William Porterfield of Vicksburg, however, did not make any patriotic sacrifices. As the

owner of a lucrative steamboat company, he had boats to help the cause, but he preferred to use them only for his own gain. Many of his neighbors needed his boats to move their possessions out of the way of marauding Union soldiers. Joseph Davis, brother of Confederate president Jefferson Davis, for example, contracted with Porterfield to move his possessions from his Warren County plantation to Hinds County. Upon receiving the bill for the move, Davis took offense at the actions of the profiteering Irish entrepreneur and refused to pay the exorbitant charge.¹⁵

Most Irish women did not follow Porterfield's unpatriotic example, because they were too concerned about their men at the front. Initially, southern women were very supportive of the war effort and therefore crucial to morale at the front. They wrote letters, operated plantations, and ran field hospitals to further the cause. The war thus opened up new opportunities for many southern women.¹⁶ Most Irish women in the South, however, had been used to working before the war and were well prepared to help their men in uniform. The Irish women of Paulding, for example, helped give their boys a lavish farewell dinner, and when the soldiers departed, they comforted each other and their Protestant neighbors.¹⁷ In Natchez, Catholic Irish women provided clothing and religious articles to departing soldiers. As casualties increased, Irish women joined the nursing staffs of numerous field hospitals. Irish nuns in particular served the needy. The mostly Irish order of the Sisters of Charity left Natchez to operate a military hospital in Monroe, Louisiana, while the altruistic actions of the Irish Ursulines in Columbia, South Carolina, made them "the mainstay and the comfort of the afflicted people" and the "Church at last popular."¹⁸ These women's endeavors were as important as the Irish soldiers' efforts on the battlefield in proving Irish loyalty to the southern cause.

Every effort by southern women for the cause was "popular" with Confederate authorities. Acknowledging the importance of female support for morale at the front, they valued and encouraged it. Through newspapers, popular magazines, and speeches, politicians and army officers bombarded southern women with praise, thanking them for their sacrifices and gently reminding them not to discourage the fighting spirit of their loved ones in uniform.¹⁹ Thus, the efforts of Irish women must have made Irish men proud of their own service and vindicated their decision to fight. Risking their lives to protect their homes was much easier when they knew that their family members, friends, and fellow immigrants were behind them fully.

Along with family support, succor from religious leaders was also important to Confederate soldiers' morale. Prior to battle or a difficult march, ministers and priests provided comfort to the troops. More im-

portant, clerics rationalized the southerner's decision to fight and kill fellow human beings through sermons that emphasized the justness of the Confederate cause.²⁰ Such clerical attitudes toward the war were even more important for Irish Catholic soldiers than for civilians. Advice from the hierarchy was very significant in influencing the Irish men's decision to join the Confederate army. The church had been vital in helping Irish men adjust to life in the South; therefore, the opinions of priests and bishops held sway over their Irish flock in gray. If Irish priests and bishops had opposed the Confederacy, it is likely that there would have been only a few Irish volunteers for the cause. Confederate recruiters recognized as much when they conceded that Irish troops' loyalty could be guaranteed with the aid of a few "good Catholic priests."²¹ Thus, Bishop John Quinlan's blessing of the Irish Confederate banners in Mobile and similar Irish Catholic gatherings in other parts of the South were more than just parts of symbolic send-off ceremonies; they were official blessings of Irish men in gray and their southern cause.²²

Support from priests remained important to Irish soldiers after enlistment. Irish military chaplains, in particular, helped to keep the Irish boys both behaving and performing well. These Irish priests cared for their soldier congregations, often at great risk to themselves. Father James McNeilly, chaplain to an Irish unit in the Army of Tennessee, went into battle with his Irish soldiers to perform the sacrament of "extreme unction" for the mortally wounded. Before blessing the deceased, he searched for their crucifixes or rosary beads. During these searches, McNeilly often discovered many Union Catholic soldiers and gave them the last rites as well.²³ Father Abram Ryan gained much of his love for the southern cause and hatred for the northern one from his difficult and dangerous service in the Army of Tennessee, while Father John Bannon of St. Louis, Missouri, endured numerous battles, including the siege of Vicksburg, with his Irish Confederate unit. Despite the hardships associated with campaigning, Bannon, as a favor to his soldiers, found the time to take care of the money his soldiers earned for serving. Keeping strict account of their deposits with him on the cover of his diary, Bannon doled out money to the boys when they asked him for it.²⁴

Father John Bannon was perhaps the most important nonfighting Irish Confederate in the Civil War. His efforts on behalf of the Confederacy impressed not only the Irish troops he served but also all Irish southerners. His renown as a Confederate and the "Fighting Chaplain" made him famous throughout the South. His prominence, however, cost him hierarchical promotion. As a candidate to fill the vacant see in Little Rock, which was created by Andrew Byrne's death, Bannon received the support of most of the southern clergy, but his ardent Confederate spirit

disqualified him from consideration for the job. Francis Kenrick, archbishop of the primary see of Baltimore, felt that because Union forces occupied large sections of Arkansas, and probably because of his own precarious position as a bishop sympathetic to the South but living in the North, it would be unwise for him to appoint such a rabid rebel to the position.²⁵

Bannon's failure to receive the Little Rock position was fortunate for the Confederacy. Captured after the fall of Vicksburg, Father Bannon received a pardon from the Union forces and went to Richmond for new duty at the behest of President Davis. With \$1,500 in gold in his pocket, Bannon traveled to Europe to attempt to prevent Irish immigrants from signing on with the Union army.²⁶

Ireland's crop failures in the early 1860s and the lure of a \$500 enlistment bounty, combined with encouragement from United States government agents throughout Ireland, prompted many natives to immigrate to the United States, directly into the Union army. Officially signed up as "laborers" to avoid violating Britain's neutrality laws, many Irish men knowingly or unknowingly ended up in blue uniforms. A number of duped Irish men complained to British consuls about their impressment into the army upon arriving in the United States. Despite the displeasure of the British government, Union recruiting agents did have some success. In 1863, Irish immigration to America jumped from the previous year's total of 40,000 to about 100,000. Union recruiting efforts, legitimate or otherwise, undoubtedly played a large role in this increase.²⁷

Despite the northern recruitment successes, Bannon left for Ireland with great optimism. Upon arriving there, however, he became discouraged. Economic and social conditions in Ireland gave many young men an incentive to accept the Union agents' offer. Pressing on with his assignment, the former chaplain decided to propagate the Confederate cause anyway. Through a vigorous newspaper, poster, and speaking campaign, he achieved some success. With the blessing of Ireland's most important cleric, Archbishop Paul Cullen, he posted bills in Dublin churches that outlined the justice of the southern cause and the dangers of volunteering to "labor" in the North. He also sent letters to every parish in the country outlining how the "dastardly nativist" Republicans had mistreated those of the Catholic faith. In his writings and speeches, he stressed that the Union army used Irish troops as cannon fodder. Although he failed to stop Irish immigration to the northern states, this Irish "Reb" did change many Irish residents' opinion of the justice of the Confederate cause and, according to his Confederate superior in London, may have cut the annual Union recruitment in Ireland by two-thirds, thereby keeping thousands of Irish men out of the Union army.²⁸

Despite Pope Pius IX's very qualified support of the South, it aided Father Bannon's campaign. Bannon visited the pope as the personal chaplain to John England's protégé, Bishop Patrick Lynch of Charleston, the Confederate envoy to the Vatican. The Irish-born Lynch was an important part of the Confederacy's attempt to gain foreign recognition. Confederate leaders had wanted this recognition, particularly from France and Britain, since the beginning of the war. They hoped that it would gain them foreign aid, thereby making the North realize the futility of its aggression and forcing it to sue for peace. The Confederacy's efforts, however, suffered a severe setback because of the surrender at Vicksburg and the defeat at Gettysburg. After these losses, Europeans believed that the North would win the Civil War and that any recognition of the Confederacy was an unnecessary slight to the United States. The consolation prize of papal recognition remained Confederate diplomacy's only hope of success.²⁹ Lynch, who had been an ardent supporter of the Confederacy in his diocese, wrote an extraordinary defense of slavery that was published in Italian, French, and German; Lynch hoped it would assuage any qualms Europeans had about recognizing the Confederacy.³⁰ The Irish churchmen's diplomatic efforts came to naught, however, when Pope Pius IX, listening to more practical advisors in the Vatican, refused to recognize the Confederacy. Yet Father Bannon never lost faith in the southern cause. He returned to Ireland for the duration of the war and remained there the rest of his life. In absentia, the Confederate Congress rewarded his efforts with a vote of thanks and a \$3,000 bonus.³¹

Unlike Bannon, however, many Confederate civilians began to lose their faith in the southern cause the longer the war dragged on. Separated from the hardships of war, Bannon could easily retain his Confederate patriotism. Those who remained in the South were not so fortunate. Increasingly discouraging news from the front, the death of loved ones, and severe economic shortages put all Confederate citizens under pressure. The relentless pursuit of victory by Union commanders after Vicksburg and Gettysburg took its toll on southern civilians.³² Enormous casualty totals brought grief to many, as did constant worry about men still in combat. One woman, consumed with fear for her husband's safety, wrote in her diary: "My husband is my country. What is country to me if he is killed?" Certain of whom to blame for her predicament, she continued, "The Confederacy! I almost hate the word."³³ Along with fear of losing loved ones, economic shortages also damaged Confederate civilian morale. Large numbers of people suffered from the lack of everything from clothing to food, the result of the Union blockade of southern ports and "disastrous" Confederate economic policies.³⁴ One observer, noticing

the increasing hardship on the faces of southern women, wrote in disbelief: "Were these the same people — these haggard, wrinkled women, bowed with care and trouble, sorrow . . . were they the same school girls of 1861?"³⁵

Catherine Culhane, a Natchez tavern keeper, did not know the sacrifice she would have to make when she saw her three Irish sons volunteer for the Confederacy. In March 1861, Martin, aged twenty-three, and John, eighteen, joined the Natchez Fencibles, the unit that eventually became Company G of the Twelfth Mississippi Infantry. Martin and John's younger brother Cornelius joined them at the front in Virginia in May 1862. In September of that year, Mrs. Culhane lost John, who died of wounds he received at the Second Battle of Manassas. Her youngest soldier died "from disease" at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in December. She managed to visit her eldest son in Virginia in June 1863, but she did not see him alive again. On 3 July he was killed at the Battle of Gettysburg.³⁶

The tightening Union blockade also affected Irish civilians, many of whom had lost their main breadwinner to the Confederate cause. Confederate authorities set up soup kitchens throughout the South and "free markets" in Mobile and New Orleans and solicited donations from wealthy citizens to buy food for the hungry poor, many of whom were Irish. Charity, however, had its limits, and occasionally Irish civilians played major roles in bread riots and looting of stores.³⁷

The most famous Confederate bread riot occurred in Virginia in 1863. Shortages developed in Richmond just a couple of weeks after the firing on Fort Sumter, because the War Department gave priority to feeding troops over civilians. Army authorities also paid only half the market value for foodstuffs, but civilians had no such benefit. Refugees, fleeing from Union invasion and flooding into the capital, only exacerbated shortages. Rampant inflation drove food prices ten times higher than before the war, and many poor Richmond women and children were starving. News of women in North Carolina having demanded and received food at "army prices" from government stores hit the capital in late March 1863. On 1 April, a group of Richmond women, along with a few men, decided to emulate the North Carolinians and "find something to eat" the next morning.³⁸

Many women armed themselves for their protest on 2 April. Their march through the city streets quickly turned violent when they attacked bakeries and general stores. Large crowds rifled the stores for food, clothing, and jewelry. Upon hearing of the riot just blocks from the Confederate "White House," President Davis went to quell it. Davis threw what money he had in his pocket at the riotous women and threatened to turn

the military on them. The crowd dispersed at the president's threat. One local newspaper blamed the disturbance on "prostitutes, professional thieves, [and] Irish and Yankee hags, gallows birds from all lands but our own." Irish women made up a large portion of Richmond's poor, and undoubtedly many of them took part in the looting. There were, however, many native southerners involved, including some of the more genteel elements of Richmond society. All southern women, including Irish immigrants, were becoming frustrated with the continuing war, and the scenes at Richmond were repeated throughout the Confederacy.³⁹

Economic problems took their toll on Irish morale, but Irish southerners suffered even more when war came to their homes. During the Union siege of Vicksburg in June 1863, Mike Donovan lost a leg when a Federal shell exploded in front of St. Paul's Catholic Church. Another shell entered and exploded in the church but caused no injuries.⁴⁰ William Porterfield's mansion, "Shamrock," received damage from the Federal bombardment. One shell came through the back door, traveled down the hall, and exited through the front door. The shell damaged a pillar and tore the top from a tree in the front yard. Porterfield may have feared military intruders more than the Yankee shelling. On one occasion, he killed a Confederate soldier and wounded two others intent on robbing his house when they broke into the grounds.⁴¹

Most Irish southerners worried about their property. Several residents of Sulphur Springs lost food and livestock to northern foragers. Near Yazoo City, John Clunan, originally from County Galway, escaped the same fate because of a wooden road. He and his family heard the sound of approaching Federal cavalry on the plank road between Benton and Yazoo City. They quickly drove their livestock into the woods and removed their valuables from the house.⁴²

After invasion, many southerners, particularly those who lived in major towns, faced Union occupation. The Irish in Memphis and New Orleans were the first Irish southerners to undergo such an experience, when northern forces captured their cities in 1862. In both instances, the Irish initially welcomed the end to war and Federal aid to stabilize the economy. One Thomas Fitzgerald of Memphis, who was never a supporter of secession, was delighted "to be again in the Union." After Union forces captured Memphis in June 1862, the new commander, William T. Sherman, allowed the Confederate municipal administration under Irish mayor John Park to stay in office. Busy with military matters, Sherman saw no reason why the civilian powers could not run the city. Park, in particular, welcomed the opportunity to continue his tenure and to hire more of his Irish supporters for the city's police force, which Sherman, a strong

believer in law and order, encouraged. The general's leniency toward Memphians endeared him to numbers of the local citizenry, Irish and native, who in large numbers renewed their loyalty to the United States.⁴³

Some New Orleanians also welcomed the opportunity to rejoin the United States. Cut off from its major trading partners in the "Old Northwest" and isolated from Europe because of the Union naval blockade of the Mississippi River, the Crescent City had seen its economy plummet. Its poorest citizens, many of whom were Irish, depended on food handouts from the "free market" for survival.⁴⁴ Thus, many Irish New Orleanians were not too distressed when Union soldiers entered their city in April 1862. For example, John Maginnis of the *True Delta* had reluctantly supported Louisiana's membership in the Confederacy. Despite a willingness to criticize Confederate leadership, he, however, did remain loyal to the war effort and in the first weeks of Union occupation determined "to stand or fall with the fortunes of [his] adopted Louisiana."⁴⁵

He quickly came to believe, however, that Federal rule was the best thing to happen to his adopted state. Unlike many of his fellow citizens, Maginnis supported Union commander General Benjamin Butler, whom Confederate sympathizers christened "Beast" because of his infamous order stating that any woman who insulted or attacked a northern soldier would "be regarded and held liable as a woman of the town plying her avocation."⁴⁶ Maginnis criticized those who blindly hated the "Yankee" Butler and the other Federal authorities. The Irish editor believed that Butler's restoration of public order, cleaning of the city, and reopening of trade with other parts of the country deserved praise. Maginnis and the *True Delta*'s proprietor, Irish-born Hugh Kennedy, advocated that all citizens take the oath of allegiance and return the city to local civilian control. Rather than "hanging about in bar-rooms listening to wild rumors [of French soldiers liberating the city]," New Orleanians needed to take back their courts from the "judicial vagaries of military tribunals" and provide a "decent existence" for their families.⁴⁷

The Irish men in charge of the *True Delta*, however, did not blindly follow the wishes of Federal authorities, thereby hinting at conditional Irish support for reconstruction. They particularly disliked the fact that many pro-Union men had once been Know-Nothings. In one article, Maginnis described a fellow newspaper editor as a "thug," by which he meant Know-Nothing, and attacked him for being the "official mouthpiece and puffer-general of the [Army] Department of the Gulf."⁴⁸ General Butler, despite the *True Delta*'s early support, eventually censured Maginnis for his criticism of Federal policy and his call for an immediate end to the war. Publisher Kennedy also drew the ire of Union officers, one of whom accused him of being "an enemy of the government" and

supporter of disunion. Kennedy denied the accusation that he or his newspaper had supported secession and added that, despite the malicious charge, he would continue in his “heartfelt desire to see [the nation] reunited, great, happy and free.”⁴⁹

Other Irish New Orleanians tried to prove their renewed loyalty to the United States by supporting President Lincoln’s 10 percent plan. In 1864 the president needed a reconstruction success to help his reelection bid. Louisiana, with its large port city of New Orleans, was well known to most Americans and Europeans and also contained a sizable northern and foreign pro-Union population. Therefore, Lincoln pressured General Nathaniel Banks, the Union commander in New Orleans who replaced Butler in late 1862, to speed up the organization of a loyal state government in Louisiana and thereby hasten its reconstruction.⁵⁰ Banks proposed an election to choose delegates who would create this government and write a new state constitution. Banks also urged that this election, to be held in March 1864, take place under the rules of the old Louisiana constitution “except so much thereof as recognizes and relates to slavery.” Since African Americans, free or slave, could not vote under the pre-Civil War constitution, Louisiana’s freedmen had no say in this reconstruction of their state. Certain Republicans, whom white southerners labeled “Radicals,” objected to the exclusion of black voters. Lincoln, however, believed Banks’s claim that a quick election and reconstruction required using the old laws and constitution and backed his general.⁵¹

Banks’s plan brought no objections from Irish Louisianians. Most of them, like Hugh Kennedy and John Maginnis, had been Democrats before the war, believed in white supremacy, and had no desire to protect black interests. Thus, a number of Irish men helped produce Louisiana’s “Free State” constitution, which recognized the end of slavery and disavowed secession but allowed only partial black suffrage for those former slaves who remained in the service of their former masters. Radical attendees at the convention complained that illiterate Irish men could vote freely in Louisiana almost immediately after they got off the boat, but free blacks of long standing in the community had no such right. The loyal white citizens of Louisiana, however, rejected this criticism and approved the new document in September 1864 by over 5,000 votes.⁵² General Banks reported to President Lincoln that “all the problems involved in the restoration of the states and the reconstruction have already been solved in Louisiana.”⁵³ Irish Louisianians had played an important role in this early reconstruction effort.

The Irish reaction to Federal occupation indicates the extent to which their fervor for the Confederacy had dissipated. Tired of war and its hardships, they accepted Union occupation as a better alternative to

hunger. As early as 1862 a Union prisoner in Columbia, South Carolina, stated that some Irish prison guards told him that the Confederate authorities were especially afraid of releasing the Irish colonel Michael Corcoran, because he “could rally the Irish of Charleston to fight with him under the old flag.”⁵⁴ The correspondent must not have heard about Corcoran’s Charleston stoning the previous year or have realized that Corcoran would have a lot less sway with Irish Charlestonians than would the ardent Confederate Bishop Lynch.

Nevertheless, by 1864 Corcoran might have had some success in persuading the Irish in Charleston to stop resisting. Such a request might also have had some success among the native population. Many native southerners lost the will to fight as the war dragged on. Some, unlike most of the Irish, had been very reluctant to get involved in the first place. Many rural areas of the South that had opposed secession refused to help the Confederacy. Sections of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Alabama that had few if any Irish residents provided large numbers of troops for the Union army. Southern civilians also sabotaged Confederate efforts at recruitment and conscription. In Jones County, Mississippi, a band of pro-Union guerrillas aided by their wives, sisters, and mothers engaged in such activities as poisoning Confederate horses and waging war on Confederate authorities.⁵⁵

Like other troops, Irish soldiers were not immune to the pleas of their loved ones. It was not a coincidence that a company of Irish Louisianians attempted to leave the Army of Tennessee to return home without permission in 1862 just weeks after New Orleans’s surrender.⁵⁶ One Irish soldier in Savannah, not a member of the Jasper Greens, told the Union prisoners whom he was guarding in late 1864 that he could not wait for General Sherman to capture Atlanta because then he would desert and join his wife who lived there. He had written to her to tell her “not to leave the city when Sherman comes in, but to stay there with the childer’s [*sic*]” until he could “come home.” In the meantime he did his best to help the Union prisoners, who sympathized with his plight, by giving them provisions and information that might help them escape. The soldier’s longing for home had driven him to treason.⁵⁷ The Jasper Greens’ desertion rate increased dramatically when they were transferred from defending their hometown, Savannah, to the fight against Sherman around Atlanta.⁵⁸ Undoubtedly worried about their families, many Irish Savannahians had grown weary of war.

Concern for their families and the loss of will at home affected even those Irish men who did not desert. John Logan Power, who stayed in service until the end of the war, felt great sadness at not being home when his daughter died.⁵⁹ Robert Newell, who worked for the Confederate

Mining and Nitre Bureau in remote parts of Texas, constantly fretted about his wife on their plantation in Louisiana. He disliked the war and having to be separated from his family. Newell warned his wife to beware of “jayhawkers” (pro-Union guerrillas) and “Yankies [*sic*]” and he worried that only “God knows what will become of us all before the War is over.” He did not desert, however, even when he was conscripted into the army. Instead, this Irishman confined his efforts to getting a post closer to home.⁶⁰ Edward Murphy, a lieutenant in a Louisiana artillery company and a widower, worried about his young son. Murphy wanted a friend to make sure that his son got “a good education,” if Murphy was killed in action. He also forwarded letters from his deceased wife for safekeeping for “Jimmy” and a personal letter to give his son “some idea of the persons his father associated with.” Murphy also asked his friend, in the event of his death, to save for Jimmy “my watch . . . should [it] reach you.”⁶¹

Along with concern for his son, Murphy also was worried about morale at home. He refused to read Kennedy and Maginnis’s *True Delta*, which he referred to as the “false Delta.” He also complained about Louisianians who were reluctant to help the Confederacy and had “not given anything like what they ought to give considering what they have at stake.” These unpatriotic southerners, Murphy believed, needed to follow the example of the Virginians whom he saw sacrificing their state for the sake of the Confederacy.⁶² Despite his disappointment in his fellow Louisianians, Murphy retained enough faith to stay and fight and eventually die “for the gallant cause he had adopted.”⁶³

Although Irish men like Power, Newell, and Murphy managed to overcome their fears about loved ones at home to stay in service, the situation on the domestic front still affected Irish enthusiasm for the cause. For example, Power’s absence from home quickly quenched the heady enthusiasm he had displayed for southern rights when Mississippi left the Union in 1861.⁶⁴ The actions of the company of Irish Louisianians who tried to leave the Army of Tennessee after the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862 contrasted sharply with the eagerness for combat they had displayed when they signed up in 1861.⁶⁵

This loss of will was not unique to Irish Confederates. Native-born soldiers also grew tired of combat and most of them welcomed the end of the war. They believed that continued resistance was useless and would only do more harm to their families. Fatigue and worry replaced their Confederate nationalism and made them long for peace.⁶⁶ Even Robert E. Lee lost the will to fight. Surrounded by Union forces near Appomattox, Virginia, in April 1865, he refused to order his men to scatter and wage guerrilla warfare on Union forces. Instead, he surrendered his

Army of Northern Virginia to the victorious General U. S. Grant and stated that continued conflict would be “useless sacrifice.”⁶⁷ Many of the Irish soldiers still in his ranks agreed with him. Some Irish men, influenced by the dejection and suffering of their families, had already reached this conclusion and gone home. Whether they had stayed at the front or left for home, remained loyal or taken the oath in an occupied area, all Irish southerners at war’s end accepted defeat and were prepared to rejoin the Union. Just as in Ireland, their struggle for independence had failed, and they now had a new “lost cause” to embrace.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

POSTWAR INTEGRATION

During the Reconstruction era, 1865–77, Irish immigrants completed their integration into southern society. The Irish accepted defeat in the Civil War, but they did not endorse northern attempts to advance the rights of the former slaves. They particularly disliked the military’s enforcement of Radical Reconstruction. An occupying army implementing policy reminded many of them of the British occupation of Ireland. Somewhat perversely, soldiers in blue protecting northern schoolteachers in black schools looked, to the Irish, like soldiers in red who had protected Irish landlords. More important, like other middle- and lower-class whites, the Irish feared the upward mobility that former slaves now attempted to achieve. The influx of rural blacks into southern cities and towns indirectly helped the Irish move upward in a society bent upon relegating blacks to second-class citizenship.¹

Long-held Irish fears about black competition became a reality during Reconstruction. As the urban African American population increased, the Irish population decreased. For example, between 1860 and 1870 the New Orleans Irish population dropped from just over 20,000 to just under 15,000. In the same period the city’s black population grew as the Irish population declined, more than doubling from just over 6,000 to 13,000. The city’s port labor force, which the Irish had dominated in the 1850s, became almost exclusively black.² When blacks, with the aid of Republicans, began to participate in politics, the Irish joined with their fellow whites as implacable opponents of Radical Reconstruction.³ Irish opposition to “Africanization” helped them again prove their loyalty to the white South. Southerners who had been indifferent to foreign immigration before the Civil War now actively encouraged it and welcomed the support of Irish who already lived in the region.

When Andrew Johnson of Tennessee became president in 1865 after the assassination of Lincoln, he and the Congress faced an enormous task. The war had shattered the southern economy, destroyed millions of dollars worth of property, and taken the lives of over 250,000 southern

men. Thousands more returned home maimed. Those who survived intact still faced the awesome task of reestablishing their lives.⁴

Irish southerners, too, had to deal with the reality of total defeat. Frank Potts, an antebellum Virginia Irish merchant and a Confederate officer, wrote that he could “see nothing but the blackest of darkness” before him. Not knowing what he was going to do, he read “the pregnant pages of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*,” which he thought “queer employment for a subjugated rebel who has no nation, no rights, and no greenbacks.”⁵ Patrick Murphy returned to Mississippi from a Union prison camp and tried to rebuild his construction business, but when he found that “decent men” could not afford to pay the bills they owed him, he became dejected and “bitter.”⁶ Hugh Gwynn, still in clothes “patched beyond all manner of recognition” a few months after his surrender, described himself as looking like a “disgraced *scare-crow*!” Gwynn hoped to go to Atlanta or Augusta, Georgia, to find an “opening . . . in the grocery and commission business.”⁷ Poor Irish southerners in towns that surrendered late in the war were also in bad economic shape. In Richmond, scene of the infamous bread riot, many local whites, native and foreign, welcomed the arrival of northern forces as the end of hard times.⁸

Throughout the South, ex-Confederates accepted defeat and returned peaceably to the Union. Former soldiers, in particular, wanted to return to normal lives. One Union observer in Virginia noted that “the most sincerely loyal Virginians [after Unionists] were those who had been lately fighting against us.” In South Carolina, a northerner, impressed by the contriteness of southern soldiers, wanted “every office in the State to be filled with ex-Confederate officers.”⁹ Hugh Gwynn, who had not yet taken an oath of loyalty and remained proud of his Confederate service, nevertheless considered himself “a loyal citizen” and boasted that he could “call for Andy Johnson as lustily as any person.”¹⁰ Even planters accepted defeat and the reality “that slavery had passed away.”¹¹

This apparent willingness on the part of white southerners to accept defeat impressed President Johnson. He liked it when a delegation from South Carolina visited the White House, admitted defeat, and pledged him their “loyal support.” Although he had spoken of severe punishment for Confederate traitors, he now seemed willing to pardon his region for its treasonable activities if that would help his fellow southerners return to loyalty to the Union. He believed that he alone could move the South “from the anarchy of defeat to the full self-government of restoration.”¹²

Johnson’s move away from the rhetoric of revenge and his view that the executive branch of government had the sole responsibility for reconstruction alienated the Radicals in Congress. He ignored their determi-

nation to participate in the process, and, with Congress out of session until the end of the year, he developed his own “presidential reconstruction.” Johnson turned to southern loyalists to implement his plan. First, he recognized the wartime governments in Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Virginia, all of which kept blacks from voting. In the remaining unreconstructed states, he appointed a series of governors to take charge of establishing new constitutions and governments. Johnson wanted a majority of these states’ white residents to take the oath of allegiance, recognize the Thirteenth Amendment, nullify their Confederate debt, and reverse their secession ordinances. He issued a general amnesty to all southerners except fourteen classes of wealthy and powerful Confederates. By the end of the year, he had completed his reconstruction and presented it to Congress as a *fait accompli*.¹³

Southerners, Irish and native, embraced Johnson’s plan by electing many former Confederate officials to state governments and sending former prominent rebels to Congress. Johnson gave the “reconstructed” state governments virtual “home rule,” and they exploited this fact to pass “black codes” that strictly regulated the lives of the freedmen. The codes, which were particularly harsh in Mississippi and South Carolina, the only two southern states with black majorities, severely restricted blacks’ freedom of movement and banned them from numerous skilled occupations. The writers of the codes hoped to keep blacks on the land, close to home, and under the continued control of their former masters. More important for the Irish, the codes, white southerners hoped, would stem the black migration to the towns and cities.¹⁴

Therefore, Irish southerners joined with their white neighbors in welcoming the latitude of presidential reconstruction. In Louisiana, New Orleans’s first civilian mayor since the occupation, Hugh Kennedy of the *True Delta*, assisted free-state governor James Madison Wells to restrict the rights of blacks and bring former arch-Confederates back into government. Kennedy had always been loyal to the Union, but he hated African Americans. He told one Republican visitor to New Orleans that he opposed parts of the Thirteenth Amendment and any form of black suffrage, even the severely limited suffrage allowed under the state’s 1864 constitution. He drew the ire of Radicals by removing pro-Union curricula from the city’s schools and welcoming the return of Confederate generals Harry T. Hays and P. G. T. Beauregard to the city.¹⁵

Kennedy’s unreconstructed attitude reflected that of many of his fellow countrymen. For example, toward the end of the war, out of pure racist malice, one Michael Gleeson, a freight packer in the Irish part of the American section, threw a black male teenager into the Mississippi River. He happily watched him drown. The Irish-born attorney general of

Free Louisiana, Bartholomew Lynch, prosecuted Gleeson for the heinous act, but an all-white jury acquitted him.¹⁶

Furthermore, after the war, Irish men in Algiers, Louisiana, organized a Fenian circle and named it in honor of Confederate hero General Pat “Claiborne” (Cleburne). The Fenian organizer, Patrick Condon, had wanted to name the circle in honor of “one of our imprisoned brothers” in Ireland. He, however, gave way to the Irish Louisianians because the Cleburne name had “a talismanic effect among the Irish of the South.” Condon noted that “Southern people, Irish included,” retained “much bitterness against the Irish in the North on account of [their] being regarded . . . as the chief cause of the destruction of the Confederacy.”¹⁷ Fortunately for Condon, John Mitchel’s endorsement of the cause helped ease the Irish southerners’ qualms about the Fenians. A group of Irish New Orleanians named their circle for Mitchel, whom Union authorities had put in jail for the Confederate sympathies he openly expressed in a New York newspaper.¹⁸

In Memphis, too, the “loyal” Irish-run city government showed unreconstructed colors. According to numerous northerners in the city, Mayor Park never shed his Confederate sympathies. He did not participate in pro-Union demonstrations during the war, and he and his police force allowed the citizens to “curs[e]” the Union and “cheer” the Confederacy. Radical Republican newspapers campaigned against him in the city’s 1863 and 1864 elections, but the voters reelected him. Distraught at Park’s success, the local Union commander suspended civil government in the city until the end of the war. In the June 1865 election in “reconstructed” Memphis, Park returned to power. Confederates who had served in the “Irish” Second Tennessee as part of Cleburne’s Division quickly found work on the city’s police force.¹⁹

The Irish and other white southerners accepted defeat and worked with Union officials, but when Congress overturned presidential reconstruction, they sided with the president. Emboldened by home rule, they refused to yield any political, social, or economic concessions on “negro” status beyond slight modifications of the black codes.²⁰ In Memphis, Mayor Park and some other prominent Irish men founded a Johnson club to help drum up support for the president. Irish policemen in the city harassed local blacks and black Union soldiers. So-called “Negro insolence” and the growing black population alarmed the Irish and other white Memphians.²¹

Tension grew throughout early 1866 as racial skirmishes between the black soldiers and the Irish policemen occurred. At the end of April, when the United States Army mustered out the last of its black soldiers,

the unrest reached a boiling point. On 1 May a group of these soldiers left Fort Pickering for south Memphis to celebrate. While reveling, they encountered a number of policemen and raised three cheers for "Old Abe Lincoln, the Great Emancipator." The Irish police responded with insults against the slain president and arrested two black men. A crowd of blacks harassed the Irish men all the way into Memphis, where the rumor that the police had shot one of their black prisoners sparked an attack on the white officers. Two policemen received bullet wounds and barely escaped to safety. The Irish policemen prepared to go into south Memphis to take care of the "negro problem" once and for all.²²

The Irish policemen and numerous other white civilians entered south Memphis in the late afternoon of 1 May. One Jackson Goodell, a local drayman, became their first victim. Two policemen dragged him from his cart, shot, and killed him. One police officer cried out, "Kill them altogether, the God d—d niggers ought to be all killed, no matter whether the small or the big ones."²³ The mob, now numbering in the hundreds, took these words to heart. For the rest of that day and into the next, they attacked the "colored" hospital, burned black churches and schools, and on a few occasions raped black women. One perpetrator told one of his victims, "You niggers have a mighty liking for the damned Yankees, but we will kill you, and you will have no liking for anyone then."²⁴

The Irish mob also turned on whites who had helped the freed people adjust to life in Memphis. One Mr. Cooper, a northern teacher at a black school, barely escaped with his life and that of his family when a number of policemen burned their house, shouting that "they would have no abolitionists in the South." A German with Unionist sympathies managed to avoid a beating, or worse, when he quickly moved away from a group of Irish policemen who called him a "Yankee nigger."²⁵

The rampage did not cease until 3 May when the city's military commander declared martial law. The violence resulted in forty-six dead blacks and two dead whites. The Irish mob burned eighty-nine black houses, four black churches, and twelve black schools.²⁶ A congressional investigation, dominated by Radical Republicans, put the blame on "the natural hostility between the Irish and Negroes . . . aggravated by the fact it had been the duty of the colored troops to patrol the city, bringing them into contact, more or less with Irish police." The investigation's report recognized black culpability in initiating the original confrontation but also stated that "the negroes had nothing to do with it after the first day, except to be killed and abused." It condemned Park's administration for inaction, and Park himself for being drunk. The committee members reserved their harshest criticism for Irish recorder John Creigh-

ton, whom they accused of encouraging the rioters. They also pointed out that Irish policemen and firemen, although they were not the only ones involved, committed the most outrageous acts.²⁷

Undoubtedly, Irish Memphians played a major role in the riot. They comprised over 90 percent of the police force, 86 percent of the fire department, and 56 percent of the city council. Some of the “better elements” of Memphis condemned the riot, blaming it on the general roughness of the Irish, but offered little sympathy to black victims. The reasons for the riot, however, went deeper than the Irish drunkenness and propensity for fighting. The huge increase in the city’s black population unnerved the Irish. These blacks competed for jobs, and it is not surprising that the first victim of Irish wrath was a drayman, an individual holding a job that the Irish had traditionally dominated. Black troops’ unwillingness to accept orders from Irish policemen caused Irish men to fear that their hard-won gains might be lost. Their livelihoods and their immigrant communities seemed under threat from Republican-inspired blacks. To the Irish, events since the Union occupation and the end of the war vindicated all their prewar worries about “Yankee and British inspired” Emancipation.²⁸

The Irish rioters all escaped severe punishment and remained unrepentant, and large numbers of black refugees left Memphis and returned to the countryside. Nonetheless, the riot did damage Irish political power in the city. The Tennessee state legislature, controlled by pro-Union members, passed the Metropolitan Police Act, which removed many Irish policemen and firemen from their posts. The act also abolished the position of recorder, thereby putting John C. Creighton out of a job. Mayor Park’s retirement from politics, because of age and fatigue exacerbated by alcohol abuse, hastened the Irish decline in influence. More important, the northern reaction to the riot threatened home rule throughout the South. Lurid newspaper accounts of the riot, along with unjustified Radical claims that a conspiracy of Confederate sympathizers had planned the violence, turned many northerners against Johnson and his reconstruction.²⁹

In New Orleans, too, Hugh Kennedy’s disdain for blacks backfired. When he courted former Confederate officers opposed to black suffrage, the voters returned former Know-Nothing and Confederate mayor John T. Monroe to office and gave control of the free-state legislature to the Democrats. Alarmed at the “rebels’ ” return to office, Kennedy’s mentor, Governor James Madison Wells, and the Louisiana Radicals, in an effort to regain power, sought to reconvene the 1864 constitutional convention. Democrats protested, but the Unionists did not relent. They arranged their convention for 30 July 1866 in the Mechanics Hall in New

Orleans. Local blacks welcomed this move, because they knew that the Unionists needed their votes and would thus enfranchise them.³⁰

In the weeks before the opening session, Orleans Parish sheriff Harry Hays, the former commander of the Louisiana Brigade, with its “Irish Sixth” in the Army of Northern Virginia, deputized large numbers of white men to be ready for any “encounters” on 30 July. On the morning of the convention, trouble started when black members of a procession on its way to the convention clashed with white onlookers. The procession made it to the Mechanics Institute, where a crowd of white policemen and former members of Hays’s brigade opened fire. The marchers ran into the institute for protection, and despite repelling two attacks from the white mob, they eventually succumbed. The whites targeted black delegates for death while allowing white ones to surrender. Outside, the violence spread through the streets of downtown New Orleans, where white men dragged blacks from streetcars and beat them. By the end of the day, the white aggressors had killed forty-six blacks and severely wounded sixty others. Only one white assailant lay dead, and he probably died from “friendly fire.” Ten had received slight wounds.³¹

Unlike the Memphis troubles, the New Orleans “riot” had been organized by the “rioters” long before the convention. Also, the Irish had not dominated the affair. In fact, two of the delegates to the convention were Irish, indicating that some Irish retained strong pro-Union tendencies. On the other hand, far more Irish were involved in instigating the disorder. A number of Irish policemen were among the slightly wounded, and one Radical observer complained that the police force, “drawn from the scum of every nation,” initiated the massacre.³²

In Memphis and New Orleans, therefore, Irish southerners made clear their willingness to defend white supremacy. They, and many other whites, would not tolerate any black involvement in politics. In the November elections, northerners rejected presidential reconstruction and gave the Republicans insurmountable majorities in both houses of Congress. This result paved the way for “Radical Reconstruction,” or, as some commentators described it, “Military Reconstruction.”³³ To achieve this outcome, in 1867 the Fortieth Congress eventually decided to abolish Johnson’s governments and divide the South into five military districts, force it to ratify the Fourteenth and later the Fifteenth Amendment, and create a period of Republican rule. Run by a combination of so-called northern “carpetbaggers,” some so-called native white southern “scalawags,” and most blacks, who together provided the bulk of Republican votes, Republican administrations in the South tried again to reconstruct the region.³⁴ The Republicans believed that unreconstructed rebels had duped the Irish and other poor whites into hating the former slaves.

Once under their own enlightened leadership, they thought, the Irish would flock to their cause.³⁵

In the early stages of Military Reconstruction, therefore, southern Republicans tried to entice Irish voters. With the help of the new president and Civil War hero, Ulysses S. Grant, who entered the White House in 1869, the Louisiana Republican Party gave federal jobs to Irish and German New Orleanians.³⁶ In Richmond, two Irish carpetbaggers prospered enough to draw the attention of the local Ku Klux Klan. Confederate veterans had founded the Klan in Tennessee after the war as a fraternal order, but within a few years it had become a violent, clandestine organization that intimidated and challenged Republican voters.³⁷ The Richmond “circle” sent one E. Dowling and another unnamed “despicable Irish Yankee” a warning to leave the city or they both would “die the death of dirty Irish Dogs.”³⁸ It is not known whether the Irish carpetbaggers heeded the Klan’s advice, but this incident demonstrates that some Irish men did participate in Radical Reconstruction and made enough of an impact to impress its greatest enemy.

Republicans wooed Irish men with public appeals as well as government jobs. A Radical newspaper editor in Mobile called on the “Working Men” of the city to rally to the Republican Party, because it had ended slavery, a “gigantic monopoly” that had “degraded the laboring man almost as much as the slave.” The editor called for increased foreign immigration to the South.³⁹ On occasion, black Republicans tried to appeal to Irish citizens. In Knoxville, Tennessee, two black city councilmen rode aboard an “omnibus” in that city’s 1869 St. Patrick’s Day parade to show support for Ireland and the Irish.⁴⁰

Republican attempts to win the Irish were not very successful. The Irish fear of a black challenge to their position was too ingrained. An “officer of the Lost Cause” and “son of an Irishman” from Wilmington, North Carolina, reported in a newspaper that under Radical rule in his city “nearly all” the police were “negroes” and that not “many Irish men or Germans get anything no matter how good a Republican they are.” The correspondent continued that the Republican Party “was only a revival of the *Know Nothing Party*,” intent to “put down the d—d Irish and Dutch [Germans] who are not half as good as the negroes.”⁴¹ The fact that many former Know-Nothings had thrown in their lot with the Republicans only gave further credence to any reports of the Irish being excluded from political largesse. The continued evidence of anti-Irish prejudice in the North did nothing to improve the Republican image among the Irish in the South. While in New York City “Orange” riots raged and scores of Irish bodies littered the streets, in Savannah the Democrat-run administration and the local Catholic church were setting up a public-funded

sectarian Catholic school system, which operated until 1917. In Tennessee the main enemy to Irish Catholics was “ignorance,” but there was “none of that rank bigotry” and “the people [were] generally fair minded.”⁴² The South contrasted sharply with the North in Irish southerners’ minds.

Thus, in cities such as New Orleans, the Irish lost interest in the Republican appeal. A leader in the Irish Republican club there resigned in 1870 because the party was “to[o] radical.” He hoped his fellow countrymen would, like him, become “more Democratic.”⁴³ Divisions were only exacerbated when the main Republican paper operated by the elite mulatto community urged blacks to break strikes because white workers on strike had “spent a good deal of money in grog-shops, spoiled their temper, worn out their shoes to parade the streets . . . and are no better in the process.”⁴⁴

The continued sectional interests of Republican leaders helped destroy the party’s attempt to attract Irish southerners. Despite their desire to expand in the South, the Republicans remained concerned primarily about their political base in the North. Too busy taking care of their northern constituencies, they never spent much time developing a coherent strategy for establishing their party in the South. Therefore, they were unable to solve the dilemma of appealing for southern white and black votes without alienating either group. Whites became angry when the Federal government appointed blacks to lucrative posts. Blacks grew tired of northern white exhortations asking them to have patience and to limit their demands for immediate social and economic equality. Therefore, serious splits developed quickly within the southern Republican Party, particularly along racial lines. These internal divisions drove many southern whites out of the party and helped solidify opposition to Radical Reconstruction.⁴⁵

The fact that the United States used military force to reconstruct the South turned many Irish southerners against the Republican Party. The immigrants left Ireland to escape military enforcement of government policy. They also knew the reality of disfranchisement, and, therefore, they did not like the Radical policy of excluding certain ex-Confederates from the voting register. Thus, the Irish concept of the similarity between the South’s and Ireland’s struggles against outside interference still had potency after the Civil War. In Alabama a Fenian organizer named O’Neill earned the plaudits of local Democrats for giving “a severe [verbal] flogging to the carpetbaggers and scalawags.” In Charleston, local Fenians described the Fifteenth Amendment “as a despotic infraction of the rights of the southern people.”⁴⁶ The analogy between Ireland and the South was not lost on southerners either. Democratic newspapers

throughout the South compared Military Reconstruction to Britain's domination of Ireland. In Louisiana, Democrats compared Radical governor William Pitt Kellogg to Oliver Cromwell, who had brutally conquered Ireland in the seventeenth century.⁴⁷

Father Abram Ryan, the "poet-priest of the Confederacy," became the living personification of the dual struggle that Irish southerners felt during Reconstruction. Born of Irish parents in Norfolk, Virginia, the young Ryan went to seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, and Buffalo, New York. Ordained on the eve of the Civil War, Ryan served as a parish priest before becoming an unofficial Confederate army chaplain. After the war, he pastored for a time in Augusta, Georgia, where he edited the *Banner of the South*, in which he extolled the "Confederate Dead" and the "Lost Cause." His poems, such as "The Conquered Banner" and "The Sword of Robert E. Lee," brought him fame throughout the South and made him the "voice of the Lost Cause."⁴⁸ Using religious imagery, he compared southerners to the persecuted early Christians and eulogized the Confederacy as a legitimate government, which heroes like Jefferson Davis had founded to protect liberty. His "theology" of the Lost Cause profoundly influenced many "unreconstructed" southerners.⁴⁹

Ryan used his columns to attack Reconstruction. Virulently opposed to any compromise with the Radicals, he believed that the "fungus" of "negro equality" would not "survive" in the South.⁵⁰ Although Ryan aimed the *Banner of the South* at southern readers, he also published it for Irish Catholics throughout the nation. The *Banner* carried regular news from parishes in Georgia and the Carolinas and published reports from episcopal councils. In his editorials, Father Ryan defended attacks against the faith, especially ones emanating from northern churches.⁵¹

The *Banner* contained copious coverage of events in Ireland as well as news of Fenian meetings in the South. One of Ryan's correspondents in Mobile, however, chided northern Fenians. This irate writer blamed Irish northerners for helping slay "Southern Irishmen" and destroying "self-government in the South." Despite these criticisms of Irish nationalists, Ryan highlighted instances that compared Ireland to the South. On one occasion, he reprinted the remarks that former Young Irelander Richard O'Gorman made at a meeting in New York City. O'Gorman had stated that the southern states had become like Ireland because they were fighting for control of their "local concerns." On the other hand, the Republicans were like the British government — purveyors of "Empire" and "occupation." O'Gorman, no doubt to Ryan's delight, praised the Democratic Party and hoped it would destroy "carpetbagger" rule.⁵²

Ryan's ultimate aim with the *Banner* was to rally Irish and native southerners to oppose Radical Reconstruction by supporting the Democrats.

He was in good position to do this, because his subscribers included many Protestant southerners who were glad to support their kindred spirit in Augusta. To them, Ryan's loyalty to the South overrode his Irishness and Catholicism. Opponents of Reconstruction had no time for nativism in their continuing struggle against the "Black" Republicans.⁵³

Even before the Radicals began to implement their Reconstruction, however, Democratic and Conservative elements in the South attempted to entice white immigrants to their side. Native southerners appreciated the Irish opposition to black equality, and they sought to encourage it further by inducing more Irish people to come to the region. Economic factors also made southerners more proimmigrant. Emancipation had revolutionized the southern economy. Former slaveowners had to get used to operating under a free labor system. Some planters could not deal with loss of control over their former bondsmen and sought non-black labor.⁵⁴ One Georgia planter inquired of a distant relative in Ireland for "information on the subject of procuring Irish laborers." Upset with "freed negro labor," whose employment had been "a failure," the planter wanted to know the cost of hiring an Irish family.⁵⁵

On a more organized level, southern state legislatures during presidential reconstruction arranged immigration conventions to try to replace black plantation labor and, at the same time, increase the white population of their respective states. These efforts were unsuccessful, because most new immigrants, including the Irish, did not want to pick cotton. In addition, southern Republicans, in some cases under pressure from black voters who feared new immigrants would "reduce [them] to an intolerable serfdom," opposed the concept.⁵⁶ The proimmigrant rhetoric of the Democrats and the opposition that southern Radicals expressed on the subject must have impressed the foreign-born already in the South. The contrast between Irish reactions to Democratic overtures and Republican efforts made this fact very clear.

Richmond's Irish-born James A. Cowardin, for example, played an important role in propagating the Conservative cause in Virginia and helping it become the first "redeemed" state in 1869. A. M. Keiley, who was also Irish, benefitted from Cowardin's support in his election to the state legislature. Keiley helped Richmond "elect" a Conservative mayor by writing an amendment to a bill recognizing the "official acts" of military appointees. The amendment gave the newly elected Conservative governor the power to appoint new city officers throughout the state "for the more efficient government of cities and towns." In response to a disputed mayoral election in the Virginia capital that it is likely the Radical candidate won, the governor appointed a Conservative to fill the "vacant" mayoralty. Keiley himself later became mayor of Richmond.⁵⁷

The same year as Virginia's "redemption," New Orleans Republicans noted that "for the most part [the Irish] have sided with the Democratic Party against us." As in the 1850s, Irish men operated Democratic ward clubs in their neighborhoods, and on occasion they ran for city posts on the "Independent" (Democratic) ticket.⁵⁸ In Savannah, longtime Irish resident John McLaughlin, under the pseudonym "Paul Pry," wrote articles for the local newspapers attacking the Radicals unmercifully. Occasionally he put his sentiments in verse. He ordered the Georgia Radicals, for example, to "Line your nest then! — With success you have driven an express — Give me facts and figures! — To your present post you drove — Unctuous hopes of treasure trove! — On the backs of niggers!"⁵⁹

Those Irish who did not take an active role in propagating the Democratic cause still helped with their votes. A study of scalawag strength in the South, based on the 1872 presidential election, a national referendum on Reconstruction, shows that the counties containing the cities where the Irish lived had virtually no white Republicans.⁶⁰ The study also points to the general failure of Republicans to make large sustained inroads into the white vote. Thus, starting with Virginia in 1869, the reconstructed states with majority white populations one by one fell into redeemer hands. Radical charges of foul play fell on deaf ears in the North, as northerners, busy dealing with the economic fallout of the Panic of 1873, tired of trouble in the South. By late 1876, only South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana remained under Radical control.⁶¹

Irish southerners played their largest role in Louisiana's "redemption" because New Orleans still had the largest Irish population in the South. The fact that whites were only a slight majority of the population in the state increased Irish importance. In preparation for the decisive 1876 election, conservative newspapers in the city praised the Irish and gave front page coverage to the St. Patrick's Day parade. The Irish responded by voting for the redeemer candidate. Irish Democratic "club captains" helped the wards with sizable Irish populations give Francis T. Nicholls, the party's candidate for governor, majorities ranging from 571 to 1,563. In the citywide result, Nicholls's majority was over 10,000 votes.⁶²

As with many other elections in the Reconstruction South, however, both sides claimed victory. A nervous standoff existed between the rival camps, but the Compromise of 1877, hammered out by southern Democrats and northern Republicans in Congress, gave Republican presidential candidate Rutherford B. Hayes all the disputed electoral college votes from Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana, and thus the presidency. Hayes promised, among other things, that Federal troops would no longer interfere in South Carolina and Louisiana.⁶³ Governor Nicholls's inauguration in St. Patrick's Hall, the parish hall of the uptown Irish,

heralded the redemption of Louisiana from Radical rule.⁶⁴ Ironically, the Reconstruction era ended where it had started, and Irish southerners, once supporters of Lincoln's plan, had helped bring about its demise.

When northern forces conquered the South, the Irish, like many other southerners, accepted defeat and welcomed a return to normality. Again, however, like many of their white neighbors, they could not handle the realities of emancipation. The key to Irish status in the South had disappeared. Without slavery, the Irish lost their value in the southern economy. Former slaves replaced the Irish in unskilled and semiskilled jobs; thus, new Irish immigrants stopped coming to the South. Every Irish community in the South decreased in population. The remaining Irish southerners accepted the fact that slavery had ended for good, but they were not ready to accept full black participation in society. Seeing black populations rise in the cities where they lived, while their own ethnic neighborhoods underwent a decline, frightened them.⁶⁵ The urban pioneers of the Old South were making way for black newcomers, and they did not like it.

Thus, any thoughts Republicans had of building an alliance between Irish immigrants and blacks were unrealistic. Memories of British occupation in Ireland and Democratic appeals for new immigrants to come to the South handicapped Republican aspirations. However, Irish fear of the black urban influx, so dramatically shown during the Memphis riot, made the Irish more amenable to racial rather than class interests. The Republicans could not overcome the opinions of people like Patrick Murphy. Murphy, who had come to the South during the famine as an artisan but who eventually owned his own business with employees and slaves, had known the hardships of being near the bottom of southern society. The pages of his diary are filled with the melancholy loneliness of a stranger in a strange land. A reluctant Confederate, nevertheless, he served in the Confederate army and returned to Mississippi ready to rebuild his business and his life after the war. Rather than feel sympathy for local blacks, who, like Irish immigrants arriving in America for the first time, faced both promise and difficulty, he had nothing but disdain for them. He complained of paying taxes "to feed nigers" and considered himself a "victim" of the blacks and the "scalawags." He disliked the "antics" of a "niger" he saw at Mass, and he described an African American's reported rape and murder of a northern schoolteacher as "chickens coming home to roost."⁶⁶

While Murphy's diary is unique, his opinions reflect those of his fellow countrymen. They, as he did, embraced the Lost Cause. Murphy displayed far more rabid Confederate thoughts in the 1870s than he had in 1861. The Irish also supported the Conservative and Democratic effort

to redeem the South. Native southerners recognized the Irish loyalty to race and finally accepted them as fellow, if still somewhat distinct, members of southern society. There would be numerous divisions and conflicts among white southerners after 1877, but for the Irish there would be nothing as menacing as the Know-Nothing threat. The continued decline in the southern economy discouraged further Irish immigration to the region.⁶⁷ Therefore, the Irish communities in the brave “New South” would become more southern and less Irish. With the Irish integrated into southern society, other immigrant groups, and native blacks in particular, would have to work the worst jobs, live in the worst housing, and face the full brunt of future southern nativist and racist backlashes.⁶⁸ Irish southerners, on the other hand, continued to prosper, celebrate their heritage, practice their faith, and take part in New South politics. They now felt that they were just as southern as their Anglo-Saxon Protestant neighbors.

CONCLUSION

IRISH SOUTHERNERS

Between 1815 and 1877, Irish immigrants in the South became Irish southerners. Most of them came as refugees of famine in Ireland to reside in the most unsanitary sections of southern towns and perform the most laborious and dangerous work. Many Irish did not survive these horrible conditions and succumbed to yellow fever, canal cave-ins, and violence on the mean streets of their neighborhoods. The majority, however, managed not only to survive but also to make positive contributions to the South. Inspired by memories of home, Irish southerners influenced many urban institutions and in so doing had a significance beyond their relatively small numbers. Their active participation in southern society guaranteed their integration and left a lasting Irish legacy in the South. They were able to achieve so much and fit in so well, however, because most native southerners had no major objections to Irish upward mobility. Irish longevity and ultimate success in the South therefore depended not only on their own efforts but also on native tolerance.

The Irish who came to the South to avoid the economic hardship and political oppression of Ireland were indeed foreigners. Although the vast majority of them spoke English, the South was alien to them. Everything from the southern climate to the presence of large numbers of African Americans led to a tremendous culture shock for Irish immigrants. The vastness and isolation of the rural South in particular were very new for people who had lived in one of the most densely populated countries in Europe. Therefore, Irish immigrants in the South were motivated to form their own rural communities or, far more commonly, to cluster in burgeoning towns. It was in these towns that the Irish had their greatest impact. Driving slaves and free blacks out of unskilled and semiskilled occupations, Irish workers and their families comprised the crucial margin in white majorities in many southern communities.

As “urban pioneers,” the Irish did some of the roughest work, tasks too dangerous for slaves. The Irish recognized their important role as southern workmen and exploited it to improve their economic situation. They

did not see themselves as “victims” of the Old South but as an important part of the southern economy. Irish men were also an integral part of the earliest city police forces, while Irish women became indispensable to prosperous southern urbanites looking for reliable domestic help. From their niche at the lower end of the urban labor market, however, the Irish moved into other occupations. A few became very prosperous in merchandising, drayage, and contracting businesses. Many others became skilled artisans. Thus, the Irish presence in the southern economy was diversified and went beyond digging ditches and unloading steamboats.

Support from family, friends, and community, along with contact with home, helped Irish immigrants gain employment and improve their economic position. Family members and friends eased Irish homesickness and were valuable contacts; they provided many new migrants with places to live and with jobs. The new migrants, without the benefit of familiar connections in the South, often found similar aid in Irish neighborhoods. Although not truly ghettoized, the Irish tended to settle near their fellow countrymen. Often in the worst parts of towns, these ethnic communities were subject to crime and violence. Nevertheless, they also spawned valuable social organizations that provided aid to new migrants, celebrated Irish heritage, and encouraged moral and economic improvement. The various societies also reinforced awareness of events in Ireland.

The Irish in the South kept in close touch with family and friends across the Atlantic Ocean and remained concerned for their welfare. Irish southerners were particularly disturbed by the British presence in Ireland, blaming it for most of Ireland’s ills. Thus, the Irish in the South supported both constitutional and violent Irish nationalists’ efforts to repeal the Union with Great Britain. This continued involvement with Irish affairs made Irish southerners more aware of their own good fortune of being in a society where “you need never tip your hat for any man.”¹ Vibrant Irish family life, neighborhoods, and societies in the South thus gave the Irish confidence to move beyond their ethnic confines to take a fuller role in southern society.

The Catholic Church in the South also provided the Irish with a strong belief in the significance of their position in the region. The sheer size of the Irish influx pressured church authorities to organize stronger dioceses. Numerous Irish clerics assisted in the effort to reconstruct the southern church. Predominantly Irish congregations appreciated the church’s efforts to cater to their spiritual and physical needs through schools, hospitals, and orphan asylums, and they responded by funding church activities. More important, they were grateful to the church for making them part of an American and southern institution. The experi-

ence gained from involvement in church affairs helped make Irish men a part of the group that Tocqueville described as antebellum America's "most zealous citizens" — Catholics.² Ironically, their retention of a distinctive Irish identity did not isolate them but increased their chances of integration.

Irish southerners demonstrated their civic "zealotry" and self-confidence by taking a keen interest in politics. Although Irish men could be found in the Whig and Democratic Parties and occasionally operated influential partisan newspapers for both, the vast majority supported the Democrats. The Irish were attracted to the Democratic rhetoric in favor of the "common man" and the party's proimmigrant policies. The party's willingness to accept the fact that the Irish could retain their ethnicity and still be loyal Americans and southerners cemented their relationship. The Democrats in turn rewarded Irish men for their important votes with government jobs.

Participation in politics made the Irish very visible in southern society, a visibility that occasionally provoked negative native reactions. The Irish in the South, however, managed to overcome their greatest antebellum challenge, the Know-Nothings. Know-Nothing Party rhetoric against the Catholic Church reminded the Irish of their troubles in Ireland and frightened them immensely. With the aid of the Democratic Party, the Irish outlasted this outburst of nativism in the South. The relative weakness of southern nativism, however, was also a major factor in Irish survival. Most southern Know-Nothings were more concerned about keeping the Union together and opposing the "secessionist" Democrats than they were about suppressing the Irish in their states.

The Know-Nothings disappeared from the southern scene because white southerners did not think they took a clear and proper stand on slavery. The Irish were not ambivalent about slavery; their strong support for the institution was one of the primary reasons that many native southerners came to their aid against the Know-Nothings. The vast majority of the Irish in the South did not own slaves, but when they could afford to buy them, they did so without any qualms whatsoever. Many of those who did not own chattel wished to do so. Others who had no hope of ever purchasing slaves nevertheless supported slavery because it was the key to Irish immigrants' economic value to the South and, more important, it highlighted the fact that the Irish, like native whites, were members of the "ruling race."³ Memories of Ireland, which one would think would have made the Irish more sympathetic toward another "oppressed race," actually promoted the contrary. Irish southerners, rich and poor, liked to contrast what they saw as the "good life" of slaves with that of the Irish peasant whom landlords threw out "on the road side to starve."⁴ They

were particularly upset at abolitionists, whom they saw as anti-Irish bigots, interfering with “southern institutions.” They admired the paternalism they saw in the South as compared with the heartlessness they had seen in Ireland.

Despite their loyalty to slavery, the Irish in the South were reluctant to support southern secession from the United States. From the nullification crisis until the 1860 presidential election, most of them took the pro-Union side. Abraham Lincoln’s victory for the “Black Republicans,” however, turned the Irish toward secession. They were not prepared to risk their position in southern society and return to the kind of life they had endured under the “oppressive union” between Great Britain and Ireland.

Therefore, they greeted the formation of the Confederacy and the Civil War with enthusiasm. Forming ethnic units, Irish men throughout the South volunteered in droves. Although not as numerous as Irish men in the Union army, Irish Confederate soldiers, through their fighting ability, performed many valuable tasks for the Confederate armies. Their military performance, however, depended on support from family and friends. Irish civilian efforts for the Confederacy increased morale among Irish soldiers. When the Irish behind the lines became disillusioned with the Confederate government and accepted Federal occupation, their disillusionment had a detrimental effect on the boys at the front. Desertions increased, and the ardor of those who remained in service decreased. By 1865, the Irish accepted the fact that a major source of their status, slavery, had ended, and they prepared to accept the reunification of the country.

The realities of emancipation, however, frightened the southern Irish. Their fears of being replaced by freedmen emerged as the Irish populations in southern cities declined and African American numbers rose. Southern blacks’ desire to take part in politics only exacerbated such fears. Thus, Irish southerners allied with their native neighbors to oppose all “Radical Reconstruction” legislation that protected southern blacks. Irish men instigated and took part in race riots and voted en masse for the “white man’s party,” the Democrats. Native whites welcomed Irish support for racial supremacy. Both native and Irish southerners celebrated together their victory over the Radicals when the major “protectors” of southern “Africanization” abandoned Reconstruction in 1877.

By that year, Irish southerners had become a permanent part of southern society. From their struggle to survive, prosper, and integrate, they left an Irish legacy in the South. Although not as influential as their far-more-numerous countrymen in the Northeast and Midwest, nor as pros-



“A New Lost Cause”:
statue to the Irish Jasper
Greens, Catholic Cemetery,
Savannah, Georgia
(Author’s collection)

perous as the Irish in opportunity-laden California, Irish southerners did have significant influence beyond their number.⁵ By concentrating in towns and cities they became an integral part of urban life in the South and influenced all city institutions. Their ethnic awareness created social clubs, which continue to this day to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day throughout the region, as well as neighborhoods which today retain names like “Irish Channel” or “Irish Hill,” even if they are no longer truly Irish enclaves. The massive influx of new Irish parishioners in the Catholic Church created vibrant urban parishes, schools, and hospitals, which became important resources for all southerners. The Irish southerners’ political activities and desire to keep the South “a white man’s country” through the ballot and with guns allowed their children and grandchildren to reap the benefits of integration and to achieve major electoral successes in the politics of the Solid South. The successor generations created political “machines” that rivaled Tammany Hall in New York City. For example, in the 1880s, Irish New Orleanians, building on their

participation in the white Democratic victory over “Radicalism,” forged a political machine with natives and other immigrant groups that dominated city politics until the 1930s.⁶

The significance of Irish immigration for modern historians of the American South, however, goes beyond place names, social organizations, churches, and urban machines. Irish integration into southern society was a remarkable achievement. Despite great trials and tribulations, the Irish in the South maintained exceptional allegiance to the South. Although their loyalty waned in the latter stages of the Civil War, their acceptance of Union victory pales in comparison to the opposition that Irish northerners demonstrated toward the Federal cause. The Irish in the North had joined the Union army in large numbers, despite the fact that the “Know-Nothings and the Republicans had acted with stupid malignancy.”⁷ The Irish, however, remained the most underrepresented societal group in the Union army, and despite Archbishop John Hughes’s instructions, the Irish northerners quickly became opponents of the government’s war effort. Angered by a conscription law that discriminated against them and still bitter over memories of prewar nativism, Irish immigrants were instrumental in draft riots throughout the North. During the particularly violent riots in New York City in 1863, the predominantly Irish mobs cheered for Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy while they beat and lynched Republicans and any black citizens they could find.⁸ To the contrary, Irish southerners in their worst bouts of disillusionment never displayed such opposition.

Irish southerners did not harbor the bitterness toward their society that Irish northerners did. Their lack of resentment existed for a variety of reasons. Memories of troubles in Ireland made any problems in the South seem inconsequential. At least in the South they were free to move elsewhere if their economic situation deteriorated, and, in addition, they had a political outlet for their frustrations. Good fortune, too, played a role. Arriving in the South during an economic renaissance, Irish migrants were afforded many opportunities for success. For example, settlers in Refugio and San Patricio, Texas, by the 1880s, had become very wealthy, and “timing was crucial in determining the possibility of [their] triumph or disaster.”⁹

Native tolerance, however, was also a very important factor in Irish integration. Although typical social barriers remained firmly in place, most wealthy southerners did not oppose Irish presence in their communities. Unlike in the North, the Irish never dominated the population of any southern city. Upper-class southerners, therefore, did not object to the Irish, because Irish immigration never threatened to overwhelm their cities or states. On the other hand, Irish numbers were large enough

to help boost white majorities. Therefore, the Irish helped soothe native fears of servile insurrection without becoming a larger threat themselves.¹⁰

Southerners also appreciated the economic value of Irish laborers, because they filled vacuums in the urban labor force created in the 1850s by the growing rural demand for slaves. The Irish were willing to take on potentially high-mortality occupations, thereby sparing valuable slave property. Some employers objected not only to the cost of Irish labor but also to the rowdiness of their foreign-born employees. Nevertheless, they recognized the importance of the Irish worker to the protection of slavery. The Irish endorsement of slavery and the efforts of the Irish to preserve the South as “a white man’s country” after emancipation only endeared them further to southerners.¹¹

The Catholicism practiced by Irish immigrants was of little concern to natives. Despite the prominence of many evangelical preachers, the Old South was not a “Bible Belt.” Only one-fifth to one-third of southerners attended church in antebellum times. Temperance and prohibition, the great causes of antebellum evangelical Protestants, failed to attract “broad community support in the South.”¹² Therefore, unlike many northerners, most southerners were not concerned about a person’s religious affiliation, and Irish southerners did not suffer serious discrimination because of their faith. In contrast, despite their large numbers, the Irish of New York City had major fears about the interference of evangelical reformers. The Irish became very nervous when the paternalism of the city’s traditional Democratic elite seemed to be giving way to the moralistic meddling of a new Republican elite that believed, for example, that “The poor need an education to refinement and taste and the mental and moral capital of gentlemen.”¹³ Nervousness about their “betters” in the ultrapatriotic Union League Club attempting to “educate” them fueled the Irish New Yorkers’ violent anger that burst forth during the 1863 draft riots.¹⁴

Less endearing to southern natives was the Irish penchant for drinking and violence, which did create a negative image. Nevertheless, Irish coarseness did not destroy their chances of integration. Alcohol and violence were not foreign to even the most “genteel” southerners, and throughout the antebellum period, southerners drank to excess and often settled disputes with violence. Many respectable planters died from “alcoholic illnesses.” Furthermore, southerners did not consider dueling and other forms of vindicating one’s honor as unlawful.¹⁵ The Irish propensity to drink and defend their reputations did not cause the major consternation within the southern establishment that it did in the more “refined” societies of the Northeast.

Native tolerance was crucial to Irish integration into society. Poor foreign immigrants from Ireland could not have become southerners without the help of what one of them called the “chivalrous people.”¹⁶ These “chivalrous” southerners eased Irish integration, and the Irish in turn embraced their new home. By the 1930s, the essential respectability of Irish southerners had grown to such heights that Margaret Mitchell, herself a descendant of Irish immigrants, was able to create from her ancestry an entirely believable character in Gerald O’Hara. O’Hara, a hard-drinking Irish Catholic immigrant who started his career in the South as a mere clerk in a Savannah store and who hated “Orangemen” (loyal Irish Protestants) and English landlords, became the model patriarch planter for the hugely popular novel *Gone with the Wind*.¹⁷ Although the fictional O’Hara was hardly representative of the story of the Irish in the South, Mitchell’s use of the character highlights the fact that it was not incongruous to equate Irishness with southernness. Thus, the archetypal southern belle in the popular mind, Scarlett O’Hara, was the daughter of an Irish Catholic. The ease with which the public accepted the Irish immigrant and his fictional family as “true” southerners emphasizes just how well the Irish had blended into the native population. With the aid of tolerant neighbors, they integrated better than any other southern minority and became the “forgotten” people of the Old South.¹⁸

APPENDIX

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS CLASSIFICATION

Listed below are the job titles ranked by occupational status in Tables 5, 6, and 7.¹ They are based on levels of wealth and status.

HIGH-WHITE-COLLAR

| | |
|--|---|
| Architect | Land Agent |
| Auctioneer (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) ² | Landlord (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) |
| Bishop | Lawyer |
| Boardinghouse/Hotelkeeper (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) | Manufacturer |
| Broker/Factor (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) | Merchant, Shopkeeper, etc. (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) |
| Builder/Contractor (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) | Minister |
| Coffeehouse proprietor (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) | Newspaper Editor |
| Dentist | Physician |
| Druggist | Priest |
| Engineer (except locomotive) | Railroad Superintendent/Treasurer |
| Justice of the Peace | Speculator (real and/or personal estate over \$1,000) |
| | Teacher |

LOW-WHITE-COLLAR

| | |
|---|--|
| Artist | Cotton Weigher |
| Auctioneer (no property, or real and/or personal estate under \$1,000) | Customs Inspector |
| Boardinghouse/Hotelkeeper (no property, or real and/or personal estate under \$1,000) | Distiller |
| Bookkeeper | Huckster |
| Broker/Factor (no property, or real and/or personal estate under \$1,000) | Jeweller |
| Builder/Contractor (no property, or real and/or personal estate under \$1,000) | Merchant, Shopkeeper, etc. (no property, or real and/or personal estate under \$1,000) |
| Clerk | Musician |
| Coffeehouse Proprietor (no property, or real and/or personal estate under \$1,000) | Peddler |
| | Pilot (steamboat) |
| | Railroad Conductor/Baggage Master |
| | Speculator (no property, or real and/or personal estate under \$1,000) |
| | Tax Collector |
| | Tobacconist |

SKILLED / ARTISAN

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Baker | Machinist |
| Barkeeper (-tender) | Mechanic |
| Blacksmith | Miller |
| Boilermaker | Molder |
| Bookbinder | Overseer |
| Bricklayer/Mason | Painter |
| Carpenter | Papermaker |
| Carriagemaker | Patternmaker |
| Caulker | Plasterer |
| Chandler | Plumber |
| Confectioner | Saddler |
| Cooper | Screwman |
| Coppersmith | Ship/Steamboat Mate |
| Engineer (locomotive) | Shoemaker |
| Finisher | Slater |
| Fitter | Stonecutter |
| Gemsmith | Tailor |
| Glazier | Tinner |
| Harnessmaker | Wheelwright |
| Hatter | |

SEMISKILLED / SERVICE

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Apprentice | Policeman/Guard |
| Bayman | Sailor |
| Cab/Hack Driver | Sawyer |
| Cook | Servant |
| Drayman | Soldier |
| Factory Worker | Steamboatman |
| Fisherman | Stevedore |
| Foundryman/Ironmaker | Teamster |
| Gardener | Waiter |
| Omnibus Driver | Warehouseman |
| Oysterman | Watchman |

UNSKILLED

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Coachman | Hostler/Liveryman |
| Ditcher | Laborer |
| Fireman (steamboat/locomotive) | Porter |

PLANTER / FARMER

Farmer

NOTES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| AAB | Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Maryland |
| AAHC | Archives of All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland |
| AAM | Archives of the Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama |
| AANO | Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Louisiana |
| ACDJ | Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi |
| ACUA | Archives of the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. |
| ADAH | Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama |
| AHC | Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia |
| CAH | Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas |
| CAT | Catholic Archives of Texas, Austin, Texas |
| CCAR | City of Charleston Archives and Records Center, Charleston, South Carolina |
| DCA | Diocese of Charleston Archives, Charleston, South Carolina |
| DRT | Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, San Antonio, Texas |
| DU | Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina |
| EU | Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia |
| GDH | Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia |
| GHS | Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia |
| GU | Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. |
| HNF | Historic Natchez Foundation, Natchez, Mississippi |
| HNOC | Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana |
| ISHL | Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois |
| LC | Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. |
| LLMVC | Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana |
| MC | Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia |
| MDAH | Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi |
| MDBA | Monsignor Daniel J. Bourke Memorial Archives, Catholic Diocese of Savannah, Savannah, Georgia |
| MPL | Mobile Public Library, Mobile, Alabama |
| MSCL | Memphis and Shelby County Library and Public Information Center, Memphis, Tennessee |
| MSU | Special Collections, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi |
| NARA | National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. |
| NLI | National Library of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland |
| NYHS | New York Historical Society, New York, New York |
| OR | <i>War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies</i> |

| | |
|-------|---|
| PRONI | Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, Northern Ireland |
| SCDAH | South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina |
| SCHS | South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina |
| SCL | South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina |
| SHC | Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina |
| SPHC | Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama |
| TU | Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana |
| USA | University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama |
| UVA | Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia |
| WPA | Works Progress Administration |

INTRODUCTION

1. The Rev. C. C. Jones to Mrs. Mary S. Mallard, 13 Dec. 1860, in Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*, 634.

2. O'Neill was referred to as Sr. because he had a nephew with the same name, who was also a priest in Georgia. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 504–8, 515–16.

3. Siegel, "Artisans and Immigrants in the Politics of Late Antebellum Georgia," is an exception, but Siegel's brief article misinterprets the Irish position in southern politics (see Chapter 8).

4. Rousey, "Aliens in the Wasp Nest," examines the prevalence of this view among American historians. The most substantial publications on the Irish in the South acknowledge an Irish presence in the region but, I believe, misinterpret its importance. See Clark, "The South's Irish Catholics," and Miller, "The Enemy Within." There is, however, a beginning of an awareness of the Irish presence in the South. See Glazier, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Irish in America*.

5. Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South*. Other important monographs on the southern plain folk include Hahn, *The Origins of Southern Populism*, and Hyde, ed., *Plain Folk of the Old South Revisited*.

6. For example, see Escott and others, eds., *Major Problems in the History of the American South*, vol. 1, *The Old South*, 2d ed.

7. See Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*; Shannon, *The American Irish*; McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*. Based on literally thousands of Irish immigrant letters, Miller's 700-page book is the most comprehensive study yet. But, while Miller discusses the Irish experience in New York City in forty-six pages, he mentions the Irish in San Francisco in only five pages and in New Orleans in just one. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 678, 681.

8. Clark, *Hibernia America*, 93. A number of monographs have looked at the Irish experience beyond New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia, but they still concentrate on the free states. Good examples include Cole, *Immigrant City: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1845–1921*; Mitchell, *The Paddy Camps: The Irish of Lowell*; Burchell, *The San Francisco Irish*; Emmons, *The Butte Irish*; McCaffrey and others, eds., *The Irish in Chicago*.

9. See, for example, Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*; Johnson and Roark, *No Char-*

Not Let Down and *Black Masters*; Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America*; Mills, *The Forgotten People*.

10. Irish was still the primary language of most of Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, the majority of Ireland's inhabitants were bilingual. In the Irish Census of 1851, less than 5 percent of the population was registered as "Irish-only" speakers. No county had an Irish-only speaking population over 25 percent. The Irish-only speaking areas were in the extreme western — the poorest — parts of Ireland. In total numbers, people from these regions did not dominate Irish emigration to America. Many of them died in Ireland. Nonetheless, many Irish in America, although bilingual, may have been more comfortable communicating in Irish. For example, Father O'Neill helped quell the Irish railroad mob by appealing to it in two different dialects of Irish. Jordan, ed., *The Census of Ireland*, 1:298, 303, 306; O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas*, 516.

11. Cash, *The Mind of the South*, and Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, 3d ed., are perhaps the best analyses of the subject. Others who examine the cultural differences include Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, and Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*. The essays in Sellers, ed., *The Southerner as American*, recognize southern distinctiveness but place southerners more in the mainstream of American culture, whereas Pessen, "How Different from Each Other Were the Antebellum North and South?" is a somewhat limited attempt to minimize the contrast between the sections.

12. Abernethy, *The South in the New Nation, 1789–1819*, 427.

13. Sydnor, *The Development of Southern Sectionalism*, ix.

14. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 318; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 193–201.

15. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 564–601; Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction and Origins of the New South, 1877–1913*; Rabinowitz, *The First New South*.

16. The term "Scots" (or more traditionally "Scotch") Irish was not used to describe the Ulster Presbyterians in America until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when many Americans of Ulster heritage, such as Woodrow Wilson, sought to distinguish themselves from the less fortunate and "unprogressive" masses of native-Irish immigrants. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 156. Miller and I have also found that the "Scots Irish" immigrants of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America did not describe themselves as "Scots Irish," but as "Irish." For example, see Miller, "Irish Immigrants in the Old South."

17. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, 305–7, 315, 325; Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America*, 114–15.

18. McDonald and McWhiney, "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation"; McWhiney, *Cracker Culture*. See also Berthoff, "Celtic Mist over the South."

19. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*; Weaver, "Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Southern Towns"; "Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Savannah"; "Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Mississippi." See also Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*.

20. Goldfield, *Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism*; Amos, *Cotton City*; Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization"; Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves."

21. Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," 1200.

22. Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens"; Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart." Another good community study, but outside the time frame of this work, is Bla-

lock, "Shades of Green," which examines the Irish experience in Birmingham, Alabama. There has also been a growth of studies examining Irish activity in the Confederate armies, but these studies focus mostly on military performance. See Gleeson, *Rebel Sons of Erin and Erin Go Gray!*; Gannon, *Irish Rebels, Confederate Tigers*; O'Grady, *Clear the Confederate Way*.

23. One historian of the Irish diaspora has pointed out the dangers of using "unrepresentative" letters and diaries to make generalizations about the overall Irish experience. See Akenson, "The Historiography of the Irish in the United States," 118, 126. Nonetheless, primary sources give us an invaluable insight into the minds of Irish migrants and their adaptation to the South, a process that every Irish person in the region had to undergo. The subjectivity of these letters and diaries is their greatest value. The use of direct testimony from the slave narratives, for example, despite all the "bias" problems, has had a revolutionary effect on the historiography of American slavery. See Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, esp. 227–38.

24. Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization," 162.

25. The greatest exponent of this thesis is Kerby Miller, as the title of his *magnus opus*, *Emigrants and Exiles*, vividly illustrates.

26. Roy Foster points out that both before and after the Great Famine there was much more of an element of choice in emigrating. In particular, after the famine, emigration became an established part of Irish life used by mostly young single men and women seeking opportunity outside of Ireland. He writes: "As the mechanisms for emigration became smoother, and the practice established on a large scale, the idea of forced expulsion became less and less relevant." Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 351. Kerby Miller agrees that the postfamine migrants had a more positive attitude about leaving Ireland, but "a large number still left reluctantly, sometimes bitterly." Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 345.

27. A Louisiana overseer, quoted in Eaton, *The Growth of Southern Civilization*, 64.

28. Randall Miller believes that cultural breakdown among the Irish in the South made the Irish very antisocial and accounted for their propensity to abuse alcohol and commit crime. See Miller, "The Enemy Within."

29. While assimilating, by retaining their Catholicism successive Irish American generations in the South never discarded all of their Irish heritage. Thus, many southern towns retain a certain pluralism. For a good discussion of the debate over second- and third-generation assimilation, see Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation," and Morawska, "The Sociology and Historiography of Immigration."

30. Eaton, *The Mind of the Old South*. Eaton calls Jefferson "the greatest of the Virginia liberals" (8) and then goes on to chronicle the South's intellectual move away from that "liberalism."

31. See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*; Jordan, *White over Black*; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*; Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears*.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power*, 263–313. Connolly correctly points out that the post-1690 penal laws were merely the culmination of a process begun in the sixteenth century that accelerated dramatically after Oliver Cromwell's conquest of Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century.

2. Tadhg Ó Neachtain, quoted in Ó Buachalla, "Irish Jacobitism and Irish Nationalism," 112.

3. Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland*. Corkery overstated, oversimplified, and over-generalized the divisions within eighteenth-century Ireland, but even his harshest critic admits that Corkery's research in the Gaelic poetry of Munster indicates "a sense of separateness, a sense of identity and nationality stronger than sectional interests." Cullen, *The Hidden Ireland: Reassessment of a Concept*, 17. See also Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, 3–56.

4. Donnelly, "The Whiteboy Movement" and "The Rightboy Movement."

5. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 137–38, 146–47.

6. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 59–63; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 138; Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, 91–93.

7. The term "Scots" or more traditionally "Scotch" Irish was not used to describe the Ulster Presbyterians until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when many Americans of Ulster heritage, like Woodrow Wilson, sought to distinguish themselves from the less fortunate and "unprogressive" masses of native-Irish immigrants. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 156. Miller and I have also found that the "Scots Irish" immigrants of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America did not describe themselves as "Scots Irish," but as "Irish." For example, see Miller, "Irish Immigrants in the Old South."

8. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity*, 65; Barkley, *Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, 19–21; Beckett, *Making of Modern Ireland, 1603–1923*, 159–60; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 157–58.

9. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America*, 6–7; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 215–16.

10. Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820*, 40–43, 51–52; Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, 218–21.

11. Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities*, 132; Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, 222.

12. Miller, *Emigrant and Exiles*, 570; Robert McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 15 Feb. 1851, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/3, PRONI; "The Irish Lad from Belfast," n.d., Benjamin Wilson Papers, box 1, folder 8, AHC.

13. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, 305–7, 315, 325; Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America*, 114–15.

14. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, 75; Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America*, 154; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 180–81.

15. Tesch, "Presbyterian Radicalism"; McBride, "William Drennan and the Dissenting Tradition"; Crawford, "The Belfast Middle Classes in the Late Eighteenth Century."

16. Whelan, "The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and Popular Culture," 269–75.

17. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, 107–335; Keogh and Furlong, eds., *The Mighty Wave*; Stewart, *The Summer Soldiers*; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 280–82.

18. Quoted in Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, 343.

19. A. D. Armstrong, quoted in Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 185.

20. Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America*, 198–200; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 188–89.

21. Curtin in *The United Irishmen* states: "Early Irish republicanism bore little resemblance to its later separatist reincarnations" and "cannot be dismissed simply as separatist and anti-English" (282). Whelan in *The Tree of Liberty* also recog-

nizes the uniquely Enlightenment-inspired eighteenth-century characteristics of the United Irishmen. David A. Wilson's new *United Irishmen, United States* sees more of a continuity between the various incarnations of Irish republicanism in America but believes that United Irishmen assimilated well into American politics and, indeed, were able "to bolster the country's sense of mission, its belief that it was the political, social, economic, religious, and moral center of the universe" (177).

22. Burke, "Piecing Together a Shattered Past: The Historical Writings of the United Irish Exiles in America," 297–306; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 185–87.

23. Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine*, 29–55; Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*, 142–48. For a concise survey of the great historiographical debate on the effects of the *Act of Union*, see Kennedy and Johnson, "The Union of Ireland and Britain."

24. Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History*, 28–29.

25. Daly, *Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800*, 13–15; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 318; Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History*, 158–59. Foster sees 1815, rather than the Great Famine (1845–49), as the major turning point in Irish economic history. Ó Gráda questions the validity of Foster's bold claim but does recognize the severity of the post-1815 downturn.

26. A. Govan to George E. Salley, 3 June 1817, Andrew Robinson Govan Papers, no box, folder 1, SCL.

27. Daly, *Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800*, 13–15; Donnelly, *The Land and the People of Nineteenth-Century Cork*, 4–5, 45; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 292–95.

28. For a good account of the complex relationship between the Irish Catholics and their church before the Great Famine, see Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland*.

29. Connolly, "Mass Politics and Sectarian Conflict," 74–83.

30. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 292–317. For a more in-depth coverage, see MacDonagh, *The Hereditary Bondsman and The Emancipist*; O'Ferrall, *Catholic Emancipation*; McCaffrey, *Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year*; Nowlan, *The Politics of Repeal*.

31. Coles, *The War of 1812*, 237.

32. Dangerfield, *The Awakening of American Nationalism*, 1; Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846*; Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815–1860*.

33. Quoted in Dangerfield, *Awakening of American Nationalism*, facsimile.

34. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 193.

35. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 292–93; Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, 26; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 193.

36. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution*, 290.

37. Potter, *To the Golden Door*, 193.

38. Quoted in *ibid.*, 180–81.

39. Michael Doheny, quoted in Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 282.

40. Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, 31–296; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 281–82, 284–86. Scholars still argue over the reasons for such mortality in peacetime in the most powerful nation on earth at that time. The reasons they cite include overpopulation, underdevelopment, millennialism among British politicians, inflexible landholding, and a lack of will by the British government to save Irish

tenants. A good synopsis of the debate can be found in Mokyr, *Why Ireland Starved*, 2–3, and Daly, “Revisionism and Irish History,” 71–89. See also Ó Gráda, *Black ’47*, and Davis, “The Historiography of the Irish Famine.”

41. Canon John O’Rourke, quoted in Donnelly, “Mass Eviction and the Great Famine,” 160.

42. Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, 331.

43. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 280.

44. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, 4.

45. Mitchel, *Jail Journal*, xxxvi–xli; Miller, “‘Revenge for Skibbereen,’” 187–89.

46. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxix–xxxii; United States Census Office, *A Compendium of the Ninth Census*, 367.

47. Wyman, *Immigrants in the Valley*, 42–44.

48. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxix–xxxii.

49. Oscar Handlin’s groundbreaking work on the Irish in Boston established this rather pessimistic view of the Irish experience in America. See *Boston’s Immigrants* and *The Uprooted*.

50. Shannon, *The American Irish*; McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*; McCaffrey and others, eds., *The Irish in Chicago*.

51. Burchell, *The San Francisco Irish*; Emmons, *The Butte Irish*. Miller cites Burchell’s work but does not reveal the positive bent of his analysis of the San Francisco Irish. See Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 315, 321, 621–22. A good synopsis of this historiographical debate is O’Day, “Revising the Irish Diaspora.”

52. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, particularly 280–344.

53. Miller’s description of prefamine Irish society has been hotly contested by Donald Akenson in *Small Differences* and “The Historiography of the Irish in the United States.” See also Corrigan, “‘I gcuntas Dé múin Béarla do na leanbháin.’” Corrigan shows that the Gaelic-speaking Irish were not handicapped economically by their culture. They demonstrated remarkable upward mobility, particularly by jettisoning their native tongue for English. Akenson also challenges Miller’s analysis of Irish America in *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer*, 233–69, by highlighting the fact that Irish Catholics in other countries such as Australia and Canada were not afflicted with the “*Catholic-Gaelic Disability*” (his emphasis). Lawrence McCaffrey believes that Miller is overly negative about the Irish American experience because of a latent anti-Americanism and because Miller bases his thesis too much on immigrant letters. See McCaffrey, *Textures of Irish America*, xi–xiv, and *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, 2–4. A good example highlighting the complexity of the Irish experience is the series of essays in Bayor and Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish*.

54. See Emmons, *The Butte Irish*, and Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia*.

55. Charles Trevelyan, quoted in Gray, “Ideology and the Famine,” 93.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Doyle, “The Irish as Urban Pioneers in the United States, 1850–1870”; McCaffrey, *Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, 1.

2. Maguire, *The Irish in America*, 214.

3. Even for an established native southerner, getting started and succeeding as a planter was not an easy task. See Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, 69–95.

4. Curry, "Urbanization and Urbanism in the Old South."
5. Goldfield, *Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia*, ix–xxix.
6. Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 59.
7. Quoted in *ibid.*, 71–73.
8. "Address of the Irish Emigrant Society of New York to the People of Ireland," quoted in Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 61.
9. *Independent* (Wexford), 1 Jan., 29 Mar. 1851.
10. Copies of Lists of Passengers Arriving at Miscellaneous Ports, NARA.
11. John Phillips to James Phillips, 12 Mar. 1819, John Phillips Letter, T.1449, PRONI; Copies of Lists of Passengers Arriving at Miscellaneous Ports, NARA; Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, NARA; Connick, *Lists of Ships' Passengers*, 2:39–40.
12. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 4:1118, 1355–56; Coppock, *Memphis Sketches*, 224.
13. The record keepers did not distinguish Irish from British passengers. British immigration to America remained at substantial levels in the nineteenth century, but between 1846 and 1851 the exodus from the British Isles grew enormously because of the famine. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 352–53. For evidence of the continued British, i.e., English, immigration, see Van Vugt, *Britain to America*. For the growing Irish component of British cities during the Great Famine, see Neal, *Black '47*, and MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain*, 42–74.
14. Quarterly Abstracts of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, NARA; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 25.
15. "Diary of My Journey across the Atlantic," Wilson Family Papers, SCHS.
16. "To the Emigrant Passengers of the Wrecked Ship 'Osborne,'" Foster of Glyde Papers, D.3618/D/9/17, PRONI. See also Harris, "'Where the Poor Man Is Not Crushed Down to Exalt the Aristocrat.'"
17. Mrs. Rose Williams to Rose McDonnell [copy], Kerby Miller Collection, NLI.
18. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 27; St. Mary's Orphan Boy's Asylum (New Orleans) Admissions and Discharges, 2:4–9, AANO.
19. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution*, 198; Connick, *Lists of Ships' Passengers*, 2:133–36.
20. Goldfield, "Cities in the Old South," 84–86; Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 42.
21. Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization," 150.
22. Emily Burke, quoted in Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 35; Hunt, "Savannah's Black and White Longshoremens," 22–28.
23. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 1 (Adams County, Miss.).
24. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.).
25. Sydnor, *Development of Southern Sectionalism*, 13–14.
26. John A. Quitman to his father, 16 June 1822, quoted in Claiborne, ed., *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman*, 71; May, *John A. Quitman*, 19–21.
27. James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 156–57.
28. Last Will and Testament of Frederick Stanton [copy], Subject File—Stanton Hall, HNF; original in Office of Chancery Clerk, Adams County Courthouse, Natchez, Mississippi.
29. James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 157.

30. James McCann to John McCann, 1 June, 9 July 1821, McCann Family Papers, SCL.
31. Ibid., 12 Aug. 1822, 3 Aug. 1828.
32. Ibid., 27 Mar. 1845.
33. Memo Book of Richard J. Brownrigg, May, June, July 1835, Brownrigg Family Papers, SHC.
34. Luckett, *The Lucketts of Georgia*, 8–9, 18–25; File — Taliaferro County Cemeteries, GDAH.
35. Quoted in Maguire, *The Irish in America*, 256–57.
36. Luckett, *The Lucketts of Georgia*, 25; *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 3 (Madison County, Miss.).
37. Subject File — Paulding, MDAH; Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi*, 94.
38. McGinty, “Some Irish Footprints among the Tall Pines,” 273–89.
39. “The Irish of Staggers Point,” no author, 8–11, DRT.
40. Oberste, *Texas Irish Empresarios and Their Colonies*, 2–29.
41. Robert Givin to John Givin, 8 Apr., 10 Sept. 1821, 14 Sept. 1822, Givin Collection, D.1141-4-5-6, PRONI.
42. John McFarland to “Emma,” 9 Oct. 1860, Blakemore (Lizzy McFarland) Collection, MDAH.
43. Daniel K. Butler to James Moloney, 3 July, 30 Aug. 1845, Moloney-Bryan-Ryan Papers, SCL.
44. John Moore to Mrs. Eleanor Wallace [typescript], 26 Feb. 1841, Wallace Family Papers, D.1195/3, PRONI; “Obituary,” John McLaughlin Papers, GHS.
45. James Black Diary, James Black Collection, D.1725/18, PRONI.
46. Alice Sharkey to Mrs. Mary Sharkey [copy], 1 Nov. 1842, Henry Durnin Mathematical Notebook, LLMVC.
47. Burt, *Nashville, Its Life and Times*, 47–48; Chalker, “Irish Catholics in the Building of the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad,” 507–16; Silver, “A New Look at Old South Urbanization,” 150; Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation*, 104.
48. Silver, “A New Look at Old South Urbanization,” 120; Shoemaker, “Strangers and Citizens,” 244; Cashin, *The Story of Augusta*, 93–94.
49. Reed, “Boom or Bust,” 35–53.
50. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 44–49.
51. Ibid., 48. For an excellent description of life on the New Orleans waterfront in the nineteenth century, see Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers*.
52. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution*, 197–98; Sydnor, *Development of Southern Sectionalism*, 13; Craven, *Growth of Southern Nationalism*, 13–15, 264–71.
53. “Sulphur Springs — History of Early Families,” File — History S, ACDJ.
54. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 3 (Issaquena County, Miss.).
55. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, 8–10, 16–18, 270–71, 358–61, 466–69, 516–22.
56. Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest: Mississippi*, 54; Goldfield, *Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism*, xvi.
57. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 47.
58. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 5 (Lauderdale County, Miss.).
59. Moore, *Through Fire and Flood*, 108–9.
60. Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi*, 113–14.

61. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, 72–76.
62. Ibid., 361, 466–69, 516–22.
63. Ibid., 16–18, 54–55, 270–71, 481.
64. Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 227–33.
65. Hall, *The Manhattaner in New Orleans*, 35–36.
66. Eaton, *The Growth of Southern Civilization*, 64.
67. Tyrone Power, quoted in Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South*, 186.
68. Silver, “A New Look at Old South Urbanization,” 162.
69. Goldfield, *Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism*, xii–xiii.
70. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 36.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, 24–37.
2. I chose Mobile, Ala.; Natchez, Miss.; New Orleans, La.; and Richmond, Va., because of their different sizes. In 1850, New Orleans had the largest population — 133,650 — followed by Richmond with 27,570, and Mobile with 22,515. Natchez, with a population of 4,434, was included to represent small towns in case there was any dissimilarity between them and the larger cities. De Bow, *Statistical View of the United States*, 397–98.
3. The Seventh Census, in 1850, was the first to include nativity and list all individuals rather than heads of family only. However, occupations were usually recorded just for males aged fifteen and over; therefore, men are the only individuals used for statistical purposes in this study. Natchez is an anomaly here because the recorded Irish male working population in the city was only ninety-four.
4. For example, Alabama’s 24,308 free laborers made up about 18 percent of the state’s total recorded workforce, Georgia’s 30,839 laborers were about 20 percent of its workforce, and Louisiana’s 21,976 also were about 20 percent. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, 11, 77, 197.
5. For occupational grouping classification, see the Appendix. Classifying nineteenth-century occupations is a difficult task as the pre-Civil War census takers were quite inconsistent. Paid according to the number of people they recorded, recorders often made double entries. Recorders who remained honest did not have a consistent method of recording occupations either. Nevertheless, with the aid of Handlin, *Boston Immigrants*, Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City*, and especially Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians*, I classified specific occupations into the rankings used here.
6. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 48–49.
7. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 5 (Orleans Parish, La.), vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.); *Seventh Census, 1850* (Henrico County, Va.). Real estate values were hugely undervalued by census takers. For example, in 1850 the Adams County recorder registered Frederick Stanton as owning just \$5,000 worth of real estate, despite the fact that he owned six plantations. *Seventh Census, 1850* (Adams County, Miss.); James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 156–57.
8. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 8 (Warren County, Miss.); Mrs. David Porterfield, interview by Kate Gabe, WPA, Sources on Mississippi History: Warren County, micro., MSU.
9. Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest*, 173, 213.

10. John Moore to his sister [typescript], 26 Feb. 1841, Wallace Family Papers, D.1195/3, PRONI.
11. Weaver, "Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Mississippi," 163.
12. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.), vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.).
13. *Seventh Census, 1850* (Adams County, Miss.); *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.).
14. Weaver, "Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Mississippi," 158–59; *Mississippi Statesman and Natchez Gazette*, 22 Feb. 1827; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 38.
15. Nancy Wightman to John Arnold [typescript], 24 July 1845, Nancy Wightman Letter, D.1771, PRONI.
16. Eaton, *The Growth of Southern Civilization*, 98.
17. James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 156–57; *Eighth Census: Slave Schedule, 1860*, vol. 3 (Madison County, Miss.).
18. Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 185; *Seventh Census: Slave Schedule, 1850* (Plaquemines Parish, La.).
19. Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 116, 120–21; Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 79.
20. W. H. Sparks, quoted in Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 118.
21. Eaton, *The Growth of Southern Civilization*, 160–61; Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 61.
22. *Eighth Census: Slave Schedule, 1860*, vol. 5. (Warren County, Miss.).
23. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 6 (Orleans Parish, La.).
24. *Mobile Daily Register*, 19 Feb. 1860; Niehaus, "Louisiana," 542.
25. Daniel Butler to John [Maloney], 30 Aug. 1845, Moloney-Bryan-Ryan Papers, SCL.
26. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 1. (Adams Co., Miss.); *Seventh Census, 1850* (Jefferson Parish, La.); Goodstein, *Nashville*, 125.
27. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.
28. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.), vols. 7, 8 (Orleans Parish, La.); Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 47; WPA, "Interesting Transcripts from the City Documents of the City of Mobile, 1823–1844" [typescript], MPL.
29. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.); *Seventh Census, 1850* (City of New Orleans); Rousey, *Policing the Southern City*, 6–7, 58–63, 68–70.
30. Cantwell, *A History of the Charleston Police Force*, 5–14; Rousey, *Policing the Southern City*, 63.
31. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.), vols. 6, 7, 8 (Orleans Parish, La.); Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 48.
32. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 5 (Orleans Parish, La.); Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization," 156–57.
33. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 6 (Orleans Parish, La.), vol. 3 (Harrison County, Miss.); Sullivan, *The Mississippi Gulf Coast*, 47.
34. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.), vols. 6, 7, 8 (Orleans Parish, La.); Glickstein, *Concepts of Free Labor in Antebellum America*, 426–27.
35. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 6 (Orleans Parish, La.); Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America*, 78–80.
36. Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 114–18; Frederick L. Olmsted, quoted in Miller, "The Enemy Within," 43.
37. J. M. Lidell to St. John R. Lidell, 28 July, 12, 20 Aug. 1853, Lidell Family Papers, LLMVC.

38. James Black Diary, James Black Collection, D.1725/18, PRONI; R. D. Williams to [Father] P. N. Lynch, 24 June 1852, Correspondence, DCA; Hoy and MacCurtain, *From Dublin to New Orleans*, 37–38.
39. Nancy Wightman to John Arnold, 24 July 1845, Nancy Wightman Letter, D.1771, PRONI.
40. Dr. William B. Waring, quoted in Farley, “The Mighty Monarch of the South,” 57–58.
41. Carrigan, “Yellow Fever in New Orleans, 1853,” 339; Cowdrey, *This Land, This South*, 41, 86.
42. Humphreys, *Yellow Fever and the South*, 48; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 29.
43. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 31; Duffy, *Sword of Pestilence*, 52.
44. Quoted in Humphreys, *Yellow Fever and the South*, 49.
45. George W. Cable, quoted in Duffy, *Sword of Pestilence*, 59; Carrigan, “Yellow Fever in New Orleans, 1853,” 349.
46. Duffy, *Sword of Pestilence*, 115; Burial Register for White People of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1853–82, AAM.
47. Duffy, *Sword of Pestilence*, 31–32.
48. Carrigan, “Privilege, Prejudice, and the Strangers’ Disease,” 572.
49. Norfolk Yellow Fever 1855 Diary by Father Robert Woodly, Maryland Province Archives, GU.
50. Carrigan, “Privilege, Prejudice and the Strangers’ Disease,” 568–78.
51. Silver, “A New Look at Old South Urbanization,” 162.
52. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.), vol. 1 (Adams County, Miss.), vol. 6 (Orleans Parish, La.); Records of the Alms House, 1803–1912, Alms House Death Register, Nov. 1852–Jan. 1865, CCAR.
53. St. Mary’s Orphan Boy’s Asylum, Admissions and Discharges, vol. 2, 1846–69, AANO; St. Mary’s C. F. Orphan Asylum, Alabama, Record 1, AAM.
54. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 6 (Orleans Parish, La.), vols. 1, 3 (Adams County, Miss.), vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.), vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.); *Seventh Census, 1850* (City of New Orleans), (Adams County, Miss.), (Henrico County, Va.), (Mobile County, Ala.).
55. *Seventh Census, 1850* (Henrico County, Va.); *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 3 (Hinds County, Miss.), vol. 12 (Henrico County, Va.).
56. Criminal Court Records, City Court of Mobile, Docket Books 1854–58, USA; *Natchez (Miss.) Statesman and Gazette*, 20 Mar. 1828.
57. *John E. Hunter v. Christopher H. Kyle*, Adams County Circuit Court, 1829, Adams County Antebellum Court Records, HNF.
58. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 7 Oct. 1854.
59. Criminal Court Records, City Court of Mobile, Docket Books 1854–58, USA; *Mobile Daily Register*, 23 Mar. 1859.
60. Criminal Court Records, City Court of Mobile, Docket Books 1854–58, USA; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 29.
61. Hogan and Davis, eds., *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 352.
62. “A Savannah resident” and “A Northern visitor,” quoted in Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 100–101.
63. Hogan and Davis, eds., *William Johnson’s Natchez*, 240.
64. *Mobile Daily Register*, 26 Mar. 1859; *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 26 June 1861.

65. *Mobile Daily Register*, 18 Sept. 1859.
66. *Ibid.*, 1 Apr. 1859.
67. Ingraham, *The Southwest by a Yankee*, 2:21.
68. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 3–5; James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 262.
69. Henry Murray, quoted in Herring, “Saloons and Drinking in Mississippi,” 20.
70. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 279.
71. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 20–21.
72. See Tables 5, 6, and 7. Estimating the mobility of the Irish in America is difficult because of mortality rates and incomplete city directories and censuses. The irregularity of recorded census information is also a problem for researchers. Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that the Irish, like many Americans, moved constantly in search of opportunity. Thernstrom, *Progress and Poverty in a Nineteenth Century City*, 31, 89, 225–39, *The Other Bostonians*, 269–88; Silver, “A New Look at Old South Urbanization,” 162–63; Wells, *Revolutions in Americans’ Lives*, 107–24.
73. Michael Gleeson to “father,” 5 Sept. 1857, Correspondence, DCA.
74. Robert McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 10 Feb. 1851, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/3, PRONI; William McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 26 May 1854, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2412/15, PRONI.
75. Mary [?] to Jane Smythe, 12 Mar. 1855, William Smythe Papers, CAH.
76. Thady Mulcahy to John O’Shaughnessy, 7 Feb. 1845, Correspondence, DCA.
77. John McDowell to Thomas McDowell, 7 Apr. 1854, T. D. S. McDowell Papers, SHC.
78. Peter Reynolds to William Reynolds, 12 Mar. 1854, Peter Reynolds Letter, NLI.
79. P. Kennedy to Vere Foster, 19 Mar. 1855, Foster of Glyde Papers, D.3618/D/8/9, PRONI.
80. Historian Kevin Kenny in his study of Irish anthracite coal workers in Pennsylvania has shown how Irish workers adapted traditional methods of organizing to the realities of the American economy. See Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*, esp. 1–44.
81. Brady, “The Irish Community in Antebellum Memphis,” 29–30.
82. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 8 Feb. 1852.
83. Brady, “The Irish Community in Antebellum Memphis,” 30.
84. Commons, ed., *History of Labor in the United States*, 335–423; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 48.
85. Hunt, “Savannah’s Black and White Longshoremen,” 41–45; Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South*, 118–19. Peter Way in his study of canal labor sees a growing class consciousness among the workers as the work itself became less skilled. For the Irish, however, ethnicity trumped class (see Chapters 4–7). Even Irish region may have trumped Irish nationality along the canals, the most dangerous work environment for Irish laborers. Way, *Common Labour*, 1–17, 263–64.
86. Bellows, *Benevolence among Slaveholders*, 181; Noe, *Southwest Virginia’s Railroad*, 82; Octavia Smith to Richard H. Smith, 29 June 1839, Richard H. Smith and Family Papers, LLMVC.
87. Quoted in Wilson and others, eds., *Queen of the South*, 230, 271.

88. Although it is from a later time period than this work, for a strong defense of the economic rationality of Irish women immigrants see Nolan, *Ourselves Alone*, 73–96. For a challenge to Nolan, see Miller and others, “‘For Love and Liberty.’”
89. Dilts, *The Great Road*, 359–60.
90. Chalker, “Irish Catholics in the Building of the Ocmulgee and Flint Railroad,” 513; O’Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 515–16; Bellows, *Benevolence among Slaveholders*, 182.
91. W. H. [Richards?] to David Campbell, 14 June 1838, Campbell Family Papers, DU.
92. H. Hinch to B. P. Hinch, 15 Mar. 1838, Benjamin P. Hinch Papers, ISHL.
93. Sydnor, *Development of Southern Sectionalism*, 265–67; Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 243–46, 325–30; Wright, *Political Economy of the Cotton South*, 121–27; Berlin and Gutman, “Natives and Immigrants, Freeman and Slaves,” 1177–81. Wright, while acknowledging that immigrants replaced slaves in the city, still believes that “the South had no unified private or social interest in encouraging immigration.” Thus, he believes that slavery discouraged immigrants from coming south. Evidence found in the letters of Irish southerners, however, challenges this thesis (see Chapter 8).
94. Walther, *The Fire-Eaters*, 171, 202, 217–19, 254–55.
95. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 1 Mar. 1848; Silver, “A New Look at Old South Urbanization,” 148; Weaver, “Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Southern Towns,” 66.
96. Quoted in Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 66.
97. *Knoxville Southern Citizen*, 4 Feb. 1858.
98. Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, 211, *Cotton Kingdom*, 233.
99. James McNamara to Vere Foster, [mid-1850s?], Foster of Glyde Papers, D.3618/D/8/11, PRONI.
100. Robert McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 24 Sept. 1853, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/9, PRONI.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Alice Sharkey to Mary Sharkey [copy], 1 Nov. 1842, Henry Durnin Mathematical Notebook, LLMVC; Michael Gleeson to father, 5 Sept. 1857, Correspondence, DCA; William McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 30 May 1854, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/15, PRONI; Owen Pidgeon to Thomas Pidgeon, 3 Oct. 1852, 6 Feb. 1853, Thomas Pidgeon Papers, GHS.
2. Obituary, James Francis Tracy Papers, DU; John Carr to Thomas McDowell, 29 Aug. 1853, T. D. S. McDowell Papers, SHC.
3. Daniel Butler to [Aunt] Mrs. James Moloney, 3 July 1845, Moloney-Bryan-Ryan Papers, SCL.
4. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 295–97; Copies of Lists of Passengers Arriving at Miscellaneous Ports, micro., m.575, rolls 4, 6, 16, NARA; Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, micro., m.259, roll 5, NARA.
5. Diner, *Erin’s Daughters in America*, 43–47; *Seventh Census, 1850* (Mobile County, Ala.), (City of New Orleans); *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.), vol. 1 (Adams County, Miss.), vols. 6, 7, 8 (Orleans Parish, La.); Shoemaker, “Strangers and Citizens,” 126.
6. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 12, 59.
7. See Chapter 1.

8. Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America*, 52–53; St. Mary's Catholic Orphan C. F. Asylum, Record 1, AAM.
9. Fr. D. J. Durbin to Archbishop Antoine Blanc, 23 Apr. 1855, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
10. *Mobile Daily Register*, 14 Apr. 1859; Herring, "Saloons and Drinking in Mississippi," 42–43.
11. *Mobile Daily Register*, 14 July 1859.
12. Edward Murphy to Josephine [Murphy], [?] Feb. 1848, 28 July 1852, Murphy Family Papers, HNOC.
13. Edward Conigland to Mary Wiatt, 10 Mar. 1855, Edward Conigland Papers, SHC.
14. *Ibid.*, 26 Feb. 1855.
15. St. Mary's C. F. Orphan Asylum, Mobile, Ala., Record 1, AAM.
16. P. Cantwell to J. P. Cantwell, 11 Sept., 17, 25 Oct. 1848, J. P. Cantwell Papers, SHC.
17. St. Mary's C. F. Orphan Asylum, Record 1, AAM.
18. Jane Armstrong to Richard Baxter, 26 Jan. 1843, Doak Family Papers, D.682/55, PRONI.
19. Daniel Griffin to Mary Griffin, 8, 17 May 1857, Lewis N. Whittle Papers, SHC.
20. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.
21. Von Hoffman, *Local Attachments*, xv–xxiv. Von Hoffman believes that historians often have a negative view of immigrant urban communities because they accept at face value the overly gloomy research of "early urban sociology."
22. *Seventh Census, 1850* (City of New Orleans); Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 139. New Orleans divided into three municipalities in 1836 because of tensions between the American and Creole elements in the city. The First Municipality, dominated by the Creoles, included the original *Vieux Carré*. Canal Street marked the dividing line between the First and Second Municipalities, often referred to as the line between "uptown" and "downtown." The Americans dominated the Second, where the majority of the Irish lived. The Third Municipality began on the other side of the First at Esplanade Avenue. It included the major docks and warehouses and a sizable poor Irish population as well. The Louisiana state legislature consolidated the municipalities in 1852. Capers, *Occupied City*, 15–17.
23. *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 6 (Orleans Parish, La.).
24. *Ibid.*
25. Capers, *The Biography of a River Town*, 192–93; Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 111.
26. Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization," 151; Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls*, 114; Cashin, *The Story of Augusta*, 106.
27. Thomas Wharton, quoted in Wilson and others, eds., *Queen of the South*, 60.
28. James Black Diary, James Black Collection, D.1725/18, PRONI; Minutes of the Hibernian Society of Charleston, SCHS.
29. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 112–13; *An Oration Delivered before the Hibernian and Irish Union Societies of Savannah*, 3; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 21 Mar. 1833, 28 Mar. 1835.
30. *Substance of a Discourse Delivered before the Hibernian Society of the City of Savannah*, 48–51.
31. *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 26 Mar. 1845.

32. Hogan and Davis, eds., *William Johnson's Natchez*, 169.
33. Celebrating St. Patrick's Day remains an integral element of Irish American identity. McCaffrey, *Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, 199. Having a day to celebrate is a key element of ethnicity for other immigrant groups. See, for example, Schultz, *Ethnicity on Parade*.
34. James Black Diary, James Black Collection, D.1725/18, PRONI; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 13.
35. Brownell and Goldfield, "Southern Urban History," 8–9.
36. Seigle, "Savannah's Own," 76; File — Irish Volunteers Company, Charleston, SCL; Minutes of the Hibernian Society of Charleston, SCHS; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 115.
37. James McGowan Collection, DU; *An Oration Delivered before the Hibernian and Union Societies*, 3.
38. *Charleston Courier*, quoted in File — Irish Volunteers Company, Charleston, SCL.
39. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 339; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 102.
40. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 103; Brady, "The Irish Community in Antebellum Memphis," 34.
41. Davis, "Attacking the 'Matchless Evil,'" 26.
42. Amos, *Cotton City*, 177–78.
43. Minutes of the Hibernian Society of Charleston, SCHS.
44. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Sentinel*, 28 Oct. 1840; *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 22 Jan., 16 Apr. 1851; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 81–82.
45. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 139–43; *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, 22 Apr. 1851. Many other places were initially overwhelmed by the famine influx. See, for example, Gallman, *Receiving Erin's Children*.
46. Petitions, General Assembly Papers, #34, SCDAH.
47. Chronology, Hibernian Benevolent Society Collection, AHC.
48. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 143; *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, 22 Apr. 1851.
49. D. M. Carroll to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 2 Dec. 1850, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
50. *Seventh Census, 1850* (Jefferson Parish, La.), (Mobile County, Ala.); *Eight Census, 1860*, vol. 8 (Orleans Parish, La.).
51. Subject File — Jasper County — History, MDAH.
52. P. C. [Patrick Carr] to Thomas McDowell, 14, 22 Oct. 1852, Ellen Carr to Thomas McDowell, 16 May 1854, John Carr to Thomas McDowell, 11 Dec. 1854, T. D. S. McDowell Papers, SHC.
53. Charles Tiernan to Luke Tiernan, 10 May 1839, Charles Tiernan Letter, LLMVC.
54. William Hill to David Hill, 7 July 1859, William Hill Papers, DU.
55. P. Henasy to John McKowen, 22 Apr. 1837, John McKowen Papers, LLMVC.
56. Harriet McLaughlin to John McLaughlin, 11 Apr., 20 June 1840, John McLaughlin Papers, GHS.
57. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.
58. Robert McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 10 Feb. 1851, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/3, PRONI.
59. David Thomson to "Cousin" [copy], William Hill Collection, T.1838/2, PRONI.

60. John Campbell to Mrs. E. Campbell, 26 Feb. 1846, Campbell Family Collection, D.1781/3/6, PRONI.
61. Moses Paul to John Graham [copy], 29 Dec. 1840, Moses Paul Letter, T.1568, PRONI.
62. Rebecca Fleming to Michael Rogers, 18 Sept. 1840, Rogers Family Papers, TU.
63. John Peters [Sr.] to John Peters [Jr.], 22 May 1851, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
64. Robert Mackay Crawford to John McKowen, 6 Oct. 1848, John McKowen Papers, LLMVC; *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 2 Sept. 1846; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 19 Sept. 1846; quoted in Hébert, *The Forgotten Colony*, 208–9.
65. Minutes of the Hibernian Society of Charleston, SCHS.
66. *Distress in Ireland*, 3; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 27 Feb. 1847.
67. *Distress in Ireland*, 30–33.
68. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 293; *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 22 Jan. 1851; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 31 Jan. 1845.
69. Irish Emigrant Society to J. Buford, 24 Nov. 1851, J. Q. A. Buford Papers, micro., UVA.
70. Irish Emigrant Society to William Devlin, 19 June 1857, William Devlin Papers, HNOG.
71. Mobile County Probate Court Records, Book 3, Mobile County Courthouse, Mobile, Ala.
72. Kerby Miller believes that Irish American nationalism was an attempt by bourgeois immigrants to ease “intraethnic class tensions” by creating their own hegemonic vision of respectable Irish America. They exploited famine memories to control their fellow countrymen and meld them into an important voting bloc, which of course would elect the respectable immigrants into office. See Miller, “Class, Culture, and Immigrant Group Identity in the United States,” 98–99, 111–18, and “Revenge for Skibbereen.” The “bourgeois” Irish in the South were genuinely affected by events in Ireland, and this reality more than a “hegemonic” plot explains their attraction to Irish nationalism.
73. *Natchez (Miss.) Gazette*, 23 Sept. 1826.
74. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 296–302. See also chap. 1, n. 30.
75. *Substance of a Discourse Delivered before the Hibernian Society of the City of Savannah*, 52.
76. McGrath, *An Address Delivered in the Cathedral of St. Finbar before the Hibernian Society*, 20–23; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 6 June 1829.
77. Robert Kee, *The Green Flag*, 188–92, 201–11. See also McCaffrey, *Daniel O’Connell and the Repeal Year*.
78. Maria McLaughlin to John McLaughlin, 16 Nov. 1842, John McLaughlin Papers, GHS; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 148; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Sentinel*, 4 July 1843.
79. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 1 July 1843.
80. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 148–49; Shoemaker, “Strangers and Citizens,” 149; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 4 Feb., 25 Mar. 1843; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 18–26; Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 274. See also Chapter 8.

81. Moses Paul to John Graham [copy], 29 Dec. 1840, Moses Paul Letter, T.1568, PRONI; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Sentinel*, 16 Feb. 1842.
82. Thomas Francis Meagher, quoted in Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 312.
83. Kee, *The Green Flag*, 270–89; Miller *Emigrants and Exiles*, 308–9.
84. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 151–52.
85. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 20 May, 8 July, 8 Aug. 1848; Griffin, *Anniversary Address before the Hibernian Society of Savannah*, [no page].
86. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 27 Aug., 2, 3 Sept. 1848.
87. *Ibid.*, 3 Sept. 1848.
88. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 16, 30 Sept., 14, 28 Oct., 11 Nov. 1848; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 152–54; John Mitchel to Matilda [his sister], 10 Apr. 1859, Pinkerton Papers, D.1078/M/7, PRONI.
89. File—Richard Dalton Williams, SPHC; R. D. Williams to [Father] P. N. Lynch, 8 Apr., 24 June 1852, Correspondence, DCA.
90. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 152.
91. Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City*, 151; Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, 99; Keneally, *The Great Shame*, 261–73, 275, 282; John Mitchel to Matilda, 6 Aug. 1855, Pinkerton Papers, D.1078/M/1, PRONI.
92. *Knoxville Southern Citizen*, 21 Jan., 11 Mar. 1858.
93. *Ibid.*, 4 Feb., 11 Mar. 1858.
94. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.
95. John Kerr to “Uncle,” 29 Jan. 1849, 25 May 1851 [typescripts], Kerr-Graham Family Papers, Mic. 144/1, 13, 19, PRONI.
96. P. Kennedy to Vere Foster, 19 Mar. 1855, Foster of Glyde Papers, D.3618/D/8/9, PRONI.
97. Robert McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 31 July 1854, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/16, PRONI.
98. The official name of the Fenians was the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), but organizer John O’Mahony gave the American branch the name Fenian after a group of warriors from ancient Irish legends. This name, however, was soon used to describe the IRB on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Organized into “circles,” the Brotherhood was formed as a secret society, but in the United States its members were quite open about their activities. Kee, *The Green Flag*, 309–10.
99. James Stephens, quoted in Kee, *The Green Flag*, 307.
100. Kee, *The Green Flag*, 311–19.
101. “A Southern Fenian” to James Stephens, 20 Oct. 1866, J. Daly [James Stephens] to “Brother” [John O’Mahony], 20 May 1864, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA.
102. Ledger of Accounts of Various Circles and Individuals Representing Obligations to Purchase Fenian Brotherhood Bonds, 1865–67, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA. The less-than-rigorous objections of the American clergy to the Fenians undoubtedly helped the organization to grow in the South. See Raftery, *The Church, the State and the Fenian Threat*, 52–82.
103. Patrick Condon to P. J. Downing, 25 Feb., 31 Mar. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA. In December 1865, a wing of the Fenian Brotherhood in America, anxious for military action, advocated an immediate invasion of British Canada. Jenkins, *Fenians and Anglo-American Relations*, 83.

104. Patrick Condon to P. J. Downing, 31 Mar. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA.
105. Biographical Sketch of Edward Conigland of Halifax, North Carolina, Edward Conigland Papers, SHC.
106. John Mitchel to W. M. Moynaghan, 19 Feb., 17 Nov. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA.
107. Kee, *The Green Flag*, 328; John Mitchel to W. M. Moynaghan, 28 Jan. 1867, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA.
108. Patrick Condon to P. J. Downing, 31 Mar. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA.
109. General Phil Sheridan to War Department, 4 June 1866, William H. Seward to Edwin Stanton, 5 June 1866, in Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, 217.
110. D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States*, 84–86, 140–92; Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, 126–28; Kee, *The Green Flag*, 332–40.
111. O'Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 119, 143–45.
112. "A Southern Fenian" to James Stephens, 20 Oct. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA. Instead of investigating Condon, Fenian leaders brought him to headquarters in New York City. From there he went to Ireland, where he played a major role in organizing the 1867 rebellion and in destroying it. His testimony at the "Fenian trials" helped convict a number of his former colleagues. O'Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 188–90.
113. R. W. Dowling to Col. [James Kelly], 25 Aug. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA.
114. Report of Meeting of United Brotherhood in New York, June 1874, John Devoy Papers, NLI.
115. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 17 Mar. 1876.
116. Report to 1879 Convention, John Devoy Papers, NLI.
117. Minutes of the 1879 Convention, John Devoy Papers, NLI.
118. Fallows, *Irish Americans*, 47–50; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 343–44; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 119; Harris, *The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland*, 189–92. Contrary to my opinion on the impact of Irish nationalism on immigrants is the classic Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism*.
119. *Substance of a Discourse Delivered before the Hibernian Society*, 50–54; Minutes of the Hibernian Society of Charleston, SCHS; Moses Paul to John Graham [copy], 29 Dec. 1840, Moses Paul Letter, T.1568, PRONI; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 18–26. See also Chapter 8.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, ix–xi; Eaton, *The Mind of the Old South*, 200–201; Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order*, ix–x.
2. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*; Davis and others, *Virginia Presbyterians in American Life*.
3. Eaton, *The Growth of Southern Civilization*, 9; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 151–59, 198.
4. John Knox Diary, Wilson Family Papers, SCHS.
5. De Bow, *Statistical View of the United States*, 133.

6. Robert McElderry to Ann McElderry, 22 Oct. 1850, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/2, PRONI.
7. "The Irish of Staggers Point," 8–9, DRT; *Natchez Mississippi Republican*, 5 Dec. 1822.
8. Alexander Wilson to Mary Wilson, 22 May 1835, Heartt-Wilson Papers, SHC.
9. Brackett, *A Discourse of the Life, Character, and Labors of the Rev. Thomas Smyth D.D.*, 17, 34.
10. The Diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky, had jurisdiction over Tennessee. Stritch, *The Catholic Church in Tennessee*, 33; Holmes, "Irish Priests in Spanish Natchez"; Din, "The Irish Mission to West Florida"; Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand*, 102–3.
11. Schmandt, "An Overview of Institutional Establishments," 57; Nolan, *St. Mary's of Natchez*, 1:87–88; Miller, "A Church in Cultural Captivity," 35.
12. McAvoy, *A History of the Catholic Church*, 93–94.
13. *Ibid.*, 103–19.
14. *Ibid.*, 105–6.
15. Father Peter Kenny to Father Matthew Gahan [typescript], 6 Mar. 1820, Father Peter Kenny Papers, GU.
16. McAvoy, *A History of the Catholic Church*, 117–19; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 107.
17. Schmandt, "An Overview of Institutional Establishments," 62–63; Miller, "A Church in Cultural Captivity," 37–38; Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England*, 1:474, 518, 526, 551–96.
18. Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England*, 1:455, 2:60–69; Ellis, *American Catholicism*, 57–58; Gleason, "American Catholics and Liberalism," 47–50.
19. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 38.
20. Quoted in Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart," 413.
21. Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England*, 1:536, 541, 2:36, 67, 153.
22. *Substance of a Discourse Delivered before the Hibernian Society*, 2–47; Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England*, 1:123; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 13 Oct. 1822, 13, 27 July, 10, 24 Aug. 1825.
23. *Tribute of Respect*, 9–10; *Charleston (S.C.) Courier*, quoted in Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 60.
24. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 529–35.
25. *Ibid.*, 123–26; Father Patrick Lynch to Archbishop [Francis P.] Kenrick, 17 July 1857, Archbishop Kenrick Papers, AAB.
26. Bishop Patrick [Lynch] to Archbishop [Francis P.] Kenrick, 22 Dec. 1859, Archbishop Kenrick Papers, AAB.
27. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 185–86.
28. Bishop Andrew [Byrne] to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 5 Dec. 1844, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO; Bishop Andrew [Byrne] to Archbishop [Samuel] Eccleston, 5 Dec. 1845, 27 Nov. 1848, Archbishop Eccleston Papers, AAB.
29. Rees, *A Farewell to Famine*, 17–18, 37–41, 67–71, 79–93.
30. Bishop Andrew [Byrne] to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 3 Oct., 26 Nov. 1851, 27 Feb. 1852, 21 Dec. 1855, 25 July 1856, 7 Apr., 14 Dec. 1859, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
31. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 187.
32. *Ibid.*, 537; Father M. D. O'Reily to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 10, 27 Feb., 21 Sept. 1840, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

33. Father Peter McLaughlin to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 1 Apr. 1859, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
34. Father George McMahon to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 19 Nov. 1858, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
35. File — O'Reilly, Father Bernard, Clergy Collection, CAT.
36. File — List of Priests, DCA; Necrology, MDBA; Bishop Antoine [Blanc] to Father Hand, 31 Mar. 1843, New Orleans Correspondence, Bishop Jean Marie [Odin] to [All Hallows College], 1 Oct. 1853, Galveston Correspondence, Bishop John [Quinlan] to Father [Bartholomew] Woodlock, 1 Oct. 1860, Mobile Correspondence, Bishop Augustine [Verot] to [All Hallows College], 5 Apr. 1859, St. Augustine Correspondence, AAHC; Lipscomb, "The Administration of John Quinlan," 13–19; *Catholic Almanac*, 1835, 1855, 1875, AANO.
37. J. N. Houston to one Mrs. Houston, 8 Mar. 1836, J. N. Houston Collection, T.2581/7, PRONI.
38. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 99–101.
39. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 504–12; [Father] J. F. O'Neill to [Father] P. N. Lynch, 15 Mar. 1857, Correspondence, DCA.
40. Buttiner, "'By Their Deeds You Shall Know Them.'" "
41. Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America*, 130–37; Bishop Andrew [Byrne] to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 25 Nov. 1850, 3 Oct. 1851; Father P. Dowley [?] to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 10 May 1847, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO; Thomas A. Dwyer to Bishop [J. M.] Odin, 29 Dec. 1848, Notre Dame Archive — Diocese of Galveston, CAT.
42. *Seventh Census, 1850* (Mobile County, Ala.), (City of New Orleans); *Eighth Census*, vol. 1. (Adams County, Miss.); Woods, "Congregations of Religious Women," 101; Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 143.
43. Woods, "Congregations of Religious Women," 123; "Molly" to Colonel [John] Ryan, 28 Apr. 1847, Moloney-Bryan-Ryan Collection, SCL; Buttiner, "'By Their Deeds You Shall Know Them.'" See also Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns*; Coburn and Smith, *Spirited Lives*.
44. Father M. D. O'Reily to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 14, 16 Oct. 1839, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Sentinel*, 9, 14, 19 Nov. 1839.
45. Father I. J. Mullon to Archbishop [J. M.] Odin, 7 Apr. 1863, Bernard Donlin to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 24 Mar. 1846, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
46. Arthur McKenna to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 8 Apr. 1859, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
47. Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland," 636–39.
48. James Maher, quoted in *ibid.*, 638.
49. Michael Jones, quoted in *ibid.*, 638.
50. Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland," 644–45; Larkin, *The Making of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland*.
51. Larkin only briefly mentions the Irish diaspora. He states, "Most of the two million Irish who emigrated between 1847 and 1860 were part of the pre-famine generation of non-practicing Catholics, if indeed they were Catholics at all." While the prefamine and famine migrants may have been less-than-perfect Roman Catholics, they like the people who stayed in Ireland longed for a more organized church. Irish southerners' activities on behalf of their church chal-

lenges Larkin's hasty dismissal of their devotion. Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland," 651. For a good description of the lack of official church practices in Ireland, see Miller, "Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine."

52. Bishop Francis [Gartland] to [All Hallows College], 16 Mar. 1851, Savannah Correspondence, AAHC.

53. Roger Donovan and others to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 2 June 1839, John E. Mangan and others to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 12 Aug. 1851, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

54. P. H. McGraw and Edward J. Elder to Bishop [Antoine] Blanc, 18 Nov. 1840, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

55. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 170–72.

56. Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi*, 94–95; File—History S, ACDJ; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 2 Feb. 1833.

57. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 9 Nov. 1825.

58. *Ibid.*, 12 July 1856; Father Peter McLaughlin to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 1 Apr. 1859, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

59. Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi*, 113–15.

60. Father J. Guillou to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 8 May 1853, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO. I am grateful to Father Francois Pellissier for translating this letter.

61. Lipscomb, "The Administration of Michael Portier," 289–91.

62. Father [Richard] Baker to Bishop [Ignatius] Reynolds, 9 Dec. 1854, Correspondence, DCA; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 107.

63. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 166; Carey, *Immigrant Bishop*, 114–26. For a copy of the constitution see *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 28 Jan. 1824.

64. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 101.

65. Nolan, *St. Mary's of Natchez*, 1:95, 2:539; File—Elder-M, ACDJ.

66. Nolan, *St. Mary's of Natchez*, 2:539; Bishop William [Elder] to Dr. Michael O'Reilly, 1859, Bishop Elder Letter Book, ACDJ.

67. Gerow, ed., *Civil War Diary of Bishop William Henry Elder*, 22–23, 30–32.

68. Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart," 89–90, 147–49; Gannon, *Rebel Bishop*, 165–91.

69. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 606–9.

70. Newspaper clipping, John McLaughlin Papers, Bishop William [Gross] to John McLaughlin, 5 Jan. 1875, John McLaughlin Papers, GHS.

71. Episcopal Diary (*Acta Episcopala*) of James Cardinal Gibbons [typescript], Part 1, 25 Sept. 1868, 16 Oct. 1877, AAB.

72. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 141; John McGinnis to John McKowen, 18 July 1849, John McKowen Papers, LLMVC.

73. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church*, 45–67, 99–100.

74. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.

75. Baptismal Records, St. Patrick's Church, St. Mary's Church [micro.], DCA; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 98–100; William O'Connell to Bishop [J. M.] Odin, 27 May 1851, Notre Dame Archive—Diocese of Galveston, CAT; O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 187.

76. Quoted in Carey, *An Immigrant Bishop*, 100.

77. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 311.

78. Miller, "A Church in Cultural Captivity," 11–52; Clark, "The South's Irish Catholics," 195–210.

79. John E. Mangan and others to Archbishop [Antoine] Blanc, 12 Aug. 1851, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO; Register of Students, 1849–54, SPHC; Lipscomb, "The Administration of Michael Portier," 296.

80. Ellis, *American Catholicism*, 87–91; Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians*, 101–9; Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart," 663–81.

81. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 159–65.

82. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 311.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 289–317; Erie, *Rainbow's End*, 31–34.

2. Capers, *The Biography of a River Town*, 108, 114; Richard Arnold, quoted in Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 344.

3. The work on political motives in Jacksonian America is prolific. Some of the more important efforts include Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy*; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*; Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*.

4. McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy*, 3; Watson, *Liberty and Power*, 3–15; Formisano, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties*, 21; Sydnor, *Development of Southern Sectionalism*, 275.

5. Potter, *To the Golden Door*, 217–19; Benson, *Concept of Jacksonian Democracy*, 321–24.

6. *Natchez (Miss.) Statesman and Gazette*, 30 Oct. 1828.

7. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 72–73.

8. After Jackson's veto of the Bank of the United States and his subsequent reelection in 1832, his opponents formed the Whig Party. Containing the Old National Republicans, pro-Bank Democrats, and state rights adherents of former vice president John C. Calhoun, the party united in its opposition to "King Andrew I." Calhoun and his supporters eventually returned to the Democratic Party in 1837, leaving National Republicans such as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster dominant in the Whig Party. Lawrence Kohl believes that the Whigs moved far beyond hatred of Andrew Jackson to form a rational and logical political philosophy. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 20–32, 95, *Political Parties and the American Political Development*, 52; Cole, *The Whig Party in the South*, 29–31; Kohl, *The Politics of Individualism*, 3–13, 42, 63–96.

9. Brown, *Politics and Statesmanship*, 47–48.

10. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 74–77.

11. Quoted in *ibid.*, 78.

12. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 79–83; *Nashville Union*, 23 May, 6 June, 3 Aug. 1844; *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 8 Oct. 1847, 4 July, 3 Nov. 1848.

13. Watson, *Liberty and Power*, 27.

14. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 83.

15. *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 13 Dec. 1848, 29 Sept. 1851; *Mississippi Free Trader* Subscription Book, Richard Elward Papers, DU.

16. Miles, "The Mississippi Press in the Jackson Era, 1826–1841," 15–16; Moore, ed., "Claiborne's Journalism in Mississippi," 93–94; Rowland, *History of Hinds County, Mississippi*, 31–32; Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart," 104–5.

17. Miles, "The Mississippi Press in the Jackson Era," 15–16.
18. *Ibid.*, 16.
19. Gonzales, "Flush Times, Depression, War, and Compromise," 293–94.
20. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Whig*, 4 Mar. 1841; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Sentinel*, 5 Mar. 1841.
21. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Sentinel and Expositor*, 28 Feb. 1842.
22. May, John A. *Quitman*, 118–19.
23. Henry S. Foote, quoted in Miles, "The Mississippi Press in the Jackson Era," 16.
24. "Locofoco" was a brand name for "strike-anywhere" matches; anti-Bank Democrats used them to light candles when their opponents, attempting to halt their nominating a slate of candidates for New York elections, turned out the lights in the convention hall. Virulently antimonopoly in rhetoric, the Locofocos attracted large numbers of New York City's "working men's" movement to the Democratic Party. Whigs saw Locofocos as one of the most dangerous elements in American politics and used the term as one of abuse or derision to imply volatility, hot-headedness, and radicalism. Watson, *Liberty and Power*, 192–93; Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*, 193–210.
25. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Sentinel and Expositor*, 23 Dec. 1842, 27 Jan., 1 Feb. 1843.
26. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Sentinel*, 9 Mar., 16 Sept., 16, 28, 31 Oct. 1840.
27. *Jackson (Miss.) Southron*, 14 June 1843; *Jackson Mississippian*, 12 July 1844.
28. May, John A. *Quitman*, 118–19; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Sentinel and Expositor*, 13 June, 4 July 1843.
29. Howe, *The Political Culture of American Whigs*, 108–9.
30. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 81–83, 139–40.
31. Howe, *The Political Culture of American Whigs*, 201–4.
32. *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 14 Aug. 1855; *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 4 Aug. 1847.
33. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 1 Nov. 1848.
34. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 83; Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 349; Cantrell, "Southerner and Nativist," 133; Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*, 209–14; Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 198–99.
35. Cobb, *Mississippi Scenes*, 142–43.
36. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 80–81, 84–85; Philip Hone, quoted in Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 203.
37. James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 133–34; Goodstein, *Nashville*, 197; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Whig*, 14 Aug. 1855.
38. Capers, *The Biography of a River Town*, 108, 114; Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 343–45.
39. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 89; Goodstein, *Nashville*, 162; Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 359; *Eighth Census, 1860*, vol. 5 (Orleans Parish, La.).
40. Erie, *Rainbow's End*, 28–30; WPA, *Index to Naturalization Records: Mississippi Courts*; Hemperley, ed., "Federal Naturalization Oaths, Savannah, Georgia," 108.
41. Quoted in Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 86.
42. The classic example of the importance of symbolism in Jacksonian America is Ward, *Andrew Jackson*.

43. Michael Gleeson to "father," 5 Sept. 1857, Correspondence, DCA. For the influence of the Irish on the Charleston police force see Chapter 7.
44. *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, quoted in Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 24.
45. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860*, 6–25, 36–37.
46. Potter, *To the Golden Door*, 295–300; Michael Feldberg, *The Philadelphia Riots of 1844*, 78–96, 99–116.
47. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 77.
48. Quoted in Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, 132.
49. Kohl, *The Politics of Individualism*, 76; Cole, *The Whig Party in the South*, 310.
50. The only other prominent Native American Associations close to New Orleans were in the border-state cities of St. Louis and Baltimore. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, 132.
51. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 8–10.
52. Quoted in Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 120–21.
53. *Washington (Miss.) Republican and Natchez Intelligencer*, 16 Aug. 1817; *Nashville Herald*, 9 May 1832.
54. *Natchez (Miss.) Statesman and Gazette*, 13 June 1829; *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 4 May 1848.
55. Quoted in Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 16; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Sentinel and Expositor*, 9 May 1843.
56. Andrew Jackson to Thomas Moody, 13 May 1842, in Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, xx.
57. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Whig*, 3 May 1842.
58. Petition of Citizens of Sumter District, General Assembly Papers, #2769, SCDAH.
59. Report of Committee on Finance and Banks on the Petition of Sundry Citizens of Sumter District, General Assembly Papers, #49, SCDAH.
60. Potter, *To the Golden Door*, 456–57; *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 24 Aug. 1847; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 132–33; *Distress in Ireland*, 28–32.
61. *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 17, 24 Feb. 1847.
62. *Ibid.*, 10, 17 Mar. 1847.
63. *Jackson (Miss.) Southron*, 26 Feb., 5 Mar. 1847.
64. Dickey, *Sergeant S. Prentiss*, 299–302.
65. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic*, 3–20.
66. *Natchez (Miss.) Gazette*, 28 Oct. 1826; Coulter, ed., *The Other Half of New Orleans*, 31–37.
67. Niehaus, "Paddy on the Local Stage and in Humor," 117–18, 121–22, 134.
68. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 2 Apr. 1848.
69. *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 3, 17 Mar. 1852; James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 228–30. An excellent work looking at Irish stereotypes in nineteenth-century song lyrics finds that the Irish in America "gradually remolded [the stereotype] into something with which they could live — and eventually something they could use to express pride in themselves." Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream*, 3.
70. Haunton, "Law and Order in Savannah," 10–11; Miller, "The Enemy Within," 45–47.
71. A Mr. C[ouper], quoted in Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, 322.

72. Octavia Smith to Richard H. Smith, 29 June 1839, Richard H. Smith and Family Papers, LLMVC.

73. Marianne Edwards to "Maria," 17 June 1860, Marianne Edwards Papers, box 1, folder 3, LLMVC.

74. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic*, 103.

75. Involvement in politics was the key to achieving integration and a more solid place within a host society. For a contrast between an effective integration into the host country's politics and a not-so-successful one, see MacRaild, "Crossing Migrant Frontiers," 56–57, 63–64.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, 6–25; Morris, *American Catholic*, 3–25.

2. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic*, 135; Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, 380–86.

3. Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development*, 149–80; Holt, "The Politics of Impatience"; Baker, *Ambivalent Americans*, xi–xvii; Mulkern, *The Know-Nothing Party in Massachusetts*, 175–85.

4. Mulkern, *The Know-Nothing Party in Massachusetts*, 87; James Dixon, quoted in Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 324.

5. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 45–56.

6. *Ibid.*, 170; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Whig*, 30 Nov., 5 Dec. 1854; *Natchez (Miss.) Daily Courier*, 5, 6 Dec. 1854; Crowson, "Southern Port City Politics," 43.

7. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 57–72.

8. Crowson, "Southern Port City Politics," v–vi, 144–45, 190.

9. *Ibid.*, 153–55.

10. Smith, "The Know-Nothings in Arkansas," 291–303.

11. [Father] J. J. O'Connell to [Father] P. N. Lynch, 1 Apr., 21 May 1855, Correspondence, DCA.

12. Goodstein, *Nashville*, 194–95; Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 231–32.

13. Wooster, "An Analysis of the Texas Know-Nothings," 414–23.

14. May, *John A. Quitman*, 296–301.

15. Quoted in Rawson, "Party Politics in Mississippi," 175–98.

16. *Ibid.*, 157; 33d Cong., 2d sess., *Congressional Globe* (11 Dec. 1854), 28:24.

17. Quoted in Rawson, "Party Politics in Mississippi," 155.

18. 34th Cong., 2d sess., *Congressional Globe* (20 June 1856), 29:1409–12; Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 121.

19. Rice, "The Know-Nothing Party in Virginia," 67–75; Simpson, *A Good Southerner*, 106–18.

20. Quoted in Rice, "The Know-Nothing Party in Virginia," 75.

21. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 96; Schott, *Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia*, 177–79, 184–91; Thompson, *Robert Toombs of Georgia*, 101–22; McCrary, "John Macpherson Berrien," 37.

22. *Natchez (Miss.) Daily Courier*, 31 Oct., 6 Nov. 1855.

23. *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 14 Aug., 31 Oct. 1855.

24. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 124–25, 163–69; McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, 101–2.

25. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 154–55, 261–80.
26. Ibid., 95, 119; Capers, *Biography of a River Town*, 116; Lipscomb, “The Administration of Michael Portier,” 308.
27. Lipscomb, “The Administration of Michael Portier,” 306–7; Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 66.
28. Lipscomb, “The Administration of Michael Portier,” 309–11.
29. WPA, “Interesting Transcriptions from the City Documents of the City of Mobile, 1845–1867” [typescript], MPL.
30. Ibid.
31. Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 38–40; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 85–86.
32. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 59–60.
33. Ibid., 118–19; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 29 Mar. 1854, 27 Mar., 7 Nov. 1855.
34. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 7 Nov. 1855.
35. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 88–90.
36. Ibid., 91; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 5, 7 Nov. 1856.
37. Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 102–3.
38. Ibid., 115; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 6 June 1860.
39. Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 115.
40. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 90; Wilson and others, eds., *Queen of the South*, 45.
41. C. E. Taylor to his father, 11 Sept. 1854, C. E. Taylor Letter, TU.
42. John Maginnis, quoted in Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 50.
43. Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 114.
44. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 88.
45. Ibid., 92.
46. Quoted in *ibid.*, 91.
47. Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 86–88.
48. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 96–97; Handbill—*True Delta Extra*, 3 June 1858, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, TU.
49. Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, 103.
50. Crowson, “Southern Port City Politics,” 171–79, 232–42; Shoemaker, “Strangers and Citizens,” 359–61; Cantwell, *A History of the Charleston Police Force*, 13; Bishop Patrick [Lynch] to Archbishop [Martin] Spalding, 1 July 1856, Archbishop Spalding Papers, AAB; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 16 Sept. 1854, 17 Feb., 3 Mar., 7, 21 Apr., 14 July, 18, 25 Aug. 1855, 20, 27 Sept., 25 Oct. 1856.
51. Norfolk Yellow Fever Diary, Maryland Province Archives, box 8, folder 4, GU; *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 14 Aug. 1855.
52. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 3 Mar., 18 Aug. 1855; William Henry Stiles, quoted in speech notes, William Henry Stiles Papers, EU.
53. William Conner to Charles Conner, 11 Mar. 1855, Annie W. Conner Collection, MSCL.
54. Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development*, 149–50; Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, 426–27; Mulkern, *The Know-Nothing Party in Massachusetts*, 172–73.
55. Overdyke, *The Know-Nothing Party in the South*, 294; Broussard, “Some Deter-

minants of Know-Nothing Electoral Strength,” 15–19; Cantrell, “Southern and Nativist,” 31.

56. Edward Conigland to Mary Wiatt, 10 Mar. 1855, Edward Conigland Papers, SHC.

57. Lipscomb, “The Administration of Michael Portier,” 317.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 32–33; Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, xiv–xv; *Slavery and Freedom*, 80–136. Both Stamp and Oakes discuss the relationships between native planters, small slaveholders, and nonslaveholders but not immigrants. Despite differences between each southern class’s attitude toward slavery, Stamp and Oakes find a unity of belief among most white southerners in the value of slavery as a means of providing upward mobility and maintaining white solidarity.

2. Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 1–6, 178–88; Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, esp. 133–63, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness*, 181–98. These works and others have brought the issue of “whiteness” to the fore, but they focus too much on labor and not enough on the complex and varied lives of Irish immigrants. The authors also openly admit that they have a political agenda in discussing this issue. Their bitterness against the white working classes for not joining with oppressed African Americans often turns their work away from history and toward polemic.

3. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 119.

4. Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 266, 274.

5. James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 156–57.

6. *Seventh Census: Slave Schedule, 1850* (Plaquemines Parish, La.).

7. Eaton, *The Growth of Southern Civilization*, 107–24; Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, 324–27.

8. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 101–2.

9. *Seventh Census: Slave Schedule, 1850* (Taliaferro County, Ga.); *Eighth Census: Slave Schedule, 1860*, vol. 6 (Taliaferro County, Ga.), vol. 3 (Madison County, Miss.).

10. *Eighth Census: Slave Schedule, 1860*, vols. 1, 3 (Adams and Madison Counties, Miss.).

11. Alice Sharkey to Mary Sharkey [copy], 1 Nov. 1842, Henry Durnin Mathematical Notebook, LLMVC.

12. *Seventh Census: Slave Schedule, 1850* (City of New Orleans).

13. Bills of Sale, George Black Papers, SCHS.

14. Bills of Sale, Michael Dillon Papers, Georgia Miscellaneous Collection, EU.

15. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.

16. John McFarland to [probably his business partner Major E. Barksdale], 25 Oct. 1861, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.

17. James Francis Tracy to Richard M. Scott, 29 Mar., 2 Apr. 1823, James Francis Tracy Papers, DU.

18. *Natchez Mississippi Republican*, 16 Mar. 1819.

19. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.

20. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 70–86. Eugene Genovese is the greatest propo-

nent of the idea of a paternalistic South that offered an alternative but “coherent World view” from that of the capitalistic North. Other historians disagree and believe that southern slavery was entrepreneurial and compatible with American free market economics. James Oakes in particular points out that small slaveholders, who were in the majority, did not have time to understand and practice paternalism. They were too busy trying to make a living. I find merit in both views and believe that southern planters were entrepreneurial businessmen but paternalistic masters as well; the paternalism ideology permeated beyond the largest slaveholders to influence southern society as a whole. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery, The World the Slaveholders Made*; Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, ix–xix; Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, 146; Pessen, “How Different from Each Other Were the Antebellum North and South?,” 1119–49.

21. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 180.
22. Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 231.
23. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, 302.
24. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 56.
25. Kennedy, ed., *Population of the United States in 1860*, 9.
26. One “T. R.” quoted in Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 80.
27. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 48–54; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 593.
28. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 80–87; Waldrep, *Roots of Disorder*, 33–34.
29. *Mobile Daily Register*, 13 Apr. 1859.
30. Ibid., 25 May 1860; Mobile City Court Docket, Mobile County Court Records, vol. 1862–1868, USA; Haunton, “Law and Order in Savannah,” 10–11; Clark, “The South’s Irish Catholics,” 200–201.
31. Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation*, 124–25.
32. Quoted in Jordan, “Schemes of Usefulness,” 225.
33. Quoted in Siegel, “Artisans and Immigrants,” 227–28.
34. Siegel, “Artisans and Immigrants,” 221; Johnson, *Toward a Patriarchal Republic*, 97–101.
35. Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*, 182–216, 231–32; Berlin and Gutman, “Natives and Immigrants,” 1196; Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 231.
36. Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation*, 105–24.
37. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.
38. P. Kennedy to Vere Foster, 19 Mar. 1855, Foster of Glyde Papers, D3618/D/8/9, PRONI.
39. Robert McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 11 Mar. 1852, Robert McElderry Collection, T2414/6, PRONI.
40. William McElderry to [Thomas McElderry], Dec. [1854], Robert McElderry Collection, T2414/8, PRONI.
41. Moses Paul to John Graham [copy], 29 Dec. 1840, Moses Paul Letter, T.1568, PRONI.
42. *Seventh Census, 1850* (Henrico County, Va.), (Mobile County, Ala.), (City of New Orleans, La.), (Jefferson Parish, La.); Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*, 254; Joyce, “The Charleston Landscape on the Eve of the Civil War,” 179–80.
43. Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*, 231–32; James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 179–80; Johnson and Roark, *Black Masters*, 176–94.
44. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 51–54.
45. Quoted in Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 124.

46. Quoted in Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 52.
47. Nancy Wightman to John Arnold [typescript], 24 July 1845, Nancy Wightman Letter, D.1771, PRONI.
48. Franklin, ed., *Reminiscences of an Active Life*, 9–15.
49. Interview with Prince Johnson, in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 80–81.
50. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 1 Aug. 1835; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 70–75, 133–49.
51. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 1, 15 Aug. 1835.
52. Maria McLaughlin to John McLaughlin, 16 Nov. 1842, John McLaughlin Papers, GHS.
53. Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 18; *Boston (Mass.) Liberator*, 24 June 1842.
54. *Boston (Mass.) Liberator*, 7 Oct. 1842.
55. Quoted in O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 514.
56. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 25 Mar. 1843.
57. Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 19–24.
58. John F. Quinn to Daniel O'Connell, 4 Feb. 1843, Correspondence, DCA.
59. Quoted in Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 26; *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 8 July 1843.
60. Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 186–87; *Savannah Daily Georgian*, 10 Aug. 1843.
61. For connections between American evangelicalism, anti-Catholicism, and abolitionism, see Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*; Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery*; Loveland, "Evangelicalism and 'Immediate Emancipation.'" For the movement's transatlantic links, see Fladeland, *Men and Brothers*; Harwood, "British Evangelical Abolitionism"; Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism."
62. Converting Catholics to "proper" ways was a key element of antebellum reform. See Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 51–52.
63. Tyrrell, "Drink and Temperance in the Antebellum South," 491.
64. *Knoxville Southern Citizen*, 11 Mar. 1858. Hillyer was actually a transplanted northerner, but knowledge of this fact would only have reinforced Mitchel's favorable view of southern society.
65. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 43–70; *Knoxville Southern Citizen*, 21 Jan. 1858.
66. *Knoxville Southern Citizen*, 18 Mar. 1858; May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire*.
67. Cooper, *Liberty and Slavery*, 173–75; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, is the best book on the nullification issue. Freehling finds that perceived threats to slavery had as much to do with South Carolina's defiance of the federal government as the tariff did. For a more interpretative account, see also Ellis, *The Union at Risk*.
68. Walther, *The Fire-Eaters*, 8; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Sentinel and Expositor*, 27 Dec. 1836, 23 May, 27 June 1837.
69. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Sentinel*, 13 Nov. 1840.
70. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Tri-Weekly Sentinel*, 5 June 1841.
71. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Daily Sentinel*, 26 Nov. 1839, 30 Oct. 1840.
72. *Vicksburg (Miss.) Tri-Weekly Sentinel*, 5 June 1841.

73. Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan*, 149–66; Walters, *The Antislavery Appeal*, 3–33; *Vicksburg (Miss.) Sentinel and Expositor*, 21 Feb. 1837.
74. Merk, *Slavery and the Annexation of Texas*, 44–83, 281–88; Lander, *Reluctant Imperialists*, 174–75. Calhoun played a major role in making annexation of Texas a national issue, because he wanted to halt British influence in the Lone Star Republic and further his own political cause.
75. Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 1–6. Horsman makes a strong case for racial superiority as a motive for and justification of American expansion. Whether it, or his definition of it as “Anglo-Saxonism,” was the primary driving force behind Manifest Destiny, however, is debatable. Other factors making Americans embrace Manifest Destiny included their concerns about population growth, industrialization, and the growth of foreign trade. Hietala, *Manifest Design*.
76. Oberste, *Texas Irish Empresarios and Their Colonies*, 151–229, 269–71.
77. Bauer, *The Mexican War*, 1–46.
78. Hogan, *The Irish Soldiers of Mexico*; Wynn, “The San Patricios”; Ibarra, “Batallón de San Patricio and the Mexican American War.”
79. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas*, 3–30.
80. File — Military Companies Savannah — Irish Jasper Greens, GHS; Seigle, “Savannah’s Own,” 9–23.
81. Muster Rolls — Mexican War, Volunteer Organizations from Louisiana, Record Group 94, NARA; Roster of the First Mississippi Rifles, MC; *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 15 July 1848; P. Cantwell to John Cantwell, 16 June 1848, J. P. Cantwell Papers, SHC.
82. Sydnor, *Development of Southern Sectionalism*, 328–29.
83. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 63–77.
84. *Natchez Mississippi Free Trader*, 12, 27 Feb., 4 June 1851.
85. Miller, “The Enemy Within,” 42.
86. File — Irish Volunteers Company, Charleston, SCL.
87. Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism*, 104–7.
88. *An Oration Delivered before the Hibernian and Irish Union Societies*, 21–25.
89. Shyrock, *Georgia and the Union in 1850*, 309.
90. Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development*, 150.
91. John Mitchel to Matilda [his sister], 10 Apr. 1859, Pinkerton Papers, D.1078/M/7, PRONI.
92. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 145–213; Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism*, 105–11.
93. Schott, *Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia*, 299–303; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 213–16; Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism*, 312–34.
94. Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism*, 368.
95. Berkeley, *Like a Plague of Locusts*, 58–60; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 157.
96. *Charleston (S.C.) Mercury*, 17 Nov. 1860.
97. The Rev. C. C. Jones to Mrs. Mary S. Mallard, 13 Dec. 1860, in Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*, 634; Berkeley, *Like a Plague of Locusts*, 66–67; Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South*, 64.
98. Subject File — Paulding, MDAH.
99. Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South*, 69, 75, 173, 122, 169.
100. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 243–45; Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton*

South, 121–25; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 51–54. Wade believes that “the total environment rather than industrial or commercial employment . . . eroded slavery in the cities.” Wright, on the other hand, disagrees and believes that economic reasons caused “the transformation of slavery in the cities.” Wade does not examine the role of immigrants in this process, but Wright does. Wright, however, believes that as sectional tensions rose, slaveholders feared and discouraged foreign immigration. Thus, slavery stopped immigrants from coming to the South. I disagree with Wright’s interpretation. The rebirth of the southern economy and slavery created opportunities for the Irish and brought all white people in the South closer together. The increase of the Irish population in the South between 1850 and 1860 shows that sectional fears did not, in fact, discourage Irish migration to the region.

101. *Charleston (S.C.) United States Catholic Miscellany*, 9 Dec. 1843, 23 Dec. 1854, 4, 18 Oct. 1856; Lipscomb, “The Administration of Bishop Portier,” 274–77; *Boston (Mass.) Liberator*, 7 Oct. 1842; Miller, “A Church in Cultural Captivity,” 15–16; Bishop F. X. Gartland to [All Hallows College], 16 Mar. 1851, Savannah Correspondence, AAHC.

102. Robert McElderry to Thomas McElderry, 31 May 1854, Robert McElderry Collection, T.2414/16, PRONI.

103. John McGinnis to John McKowen, 12 Mar. 1848, John McKowen Papers, LLMVC.

104. Meyers, “‘Come Let Us Fly to Freedom’s Sky,’ ” 33.

105. Quoted in Jordan, “Schemes of Usefulness,” 225.

106. *Knoxville Southern Citizen*, 18 Mar. 1858. See also Gleeson, “Parallel Struggles.”

107. John McFarland to his mother, 20 Apr. 1861, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Rowland, *History of Hinds County*, 31–32; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 158.

2. *Charleston (S.C.) Catholic Miscellany*, 29 Dec. 1860; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 264–75; Current, *Lincoln and the First Shot*; Swanberg, *First Blood*, 102–8.

3. Swanberg, *First Blood*, 215–16; *Charleston (S.C.) Mercury*, 29 Dec. 1860.

4. Swanberg, *First Blood*, 330–32.

5. Nash, *Biographical Sketches of General Pat Cleburne*, 103; Purdue, *Pat Cleburne*, 67–69; Symonds, *Stonewall of the West*, 45–46.

6. William C. Nugent to John J. Pettus, 18 Apr. 1861, quoted in Bettersworth, ed., *Mississippi in the Confederacy*, 49.

7. *Natchez (Miss.) Daily Courier*, 3, 4, 14, 31 May 1861.

8. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 96; Lipscomb, “The Administration of John Quinlan,” 57; Confederate Muster Rolls Collection, Twenty-fourth Alabama Infantry, Company B, ADAH.

9. WPA, Sources on Mississippi History: Warren County, [micro.].

10. Jones, *Lee’s Tigers*, 6–7.

11. *Ibid.*, 238–39; Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 109.

12. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 496–502; WPA, Source Material on Mississippi History: Jasper County, [micro.].

13. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 283–84; *Eighth Census, 1860*, vols. 5–8 (Orleans Parish, La.), vol. 9 (Mobile County, Ala.); Descriptive List of Crew on CSS *Tennessee* (Mobile Squadron), MC.
14. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 120–22.
15. *Ibid.*, 135; Symonds, *Stonewall of the West*, 21–24; Purdue, *Pat Cleburne*, 9–14.
16. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 339–46.
17. William Henry Russell, quoted in Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 161.
18. Jones, *Lee's Tigers*, 18–19.
19. Quoted in *ibid.*, 17.
20. Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 323–427; Gannon, *Irish Rebels, Confederate Tigers*, 41–42; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, 46.
21. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. I, 649–51; Tanner, *Stonewall in the Valley*, 270–72. For the best description of the Sixth's actions in the Valley see Gannon, *Irish Rebels, Confederate Tigers*, 19–66.
22. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. I, 650; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, 73.
23. Jones, ed., *The Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour*, 48–49.
24. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 314–15; *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 15, 239.
25. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 655–56.
26. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy*, 188–91.
27. *Ibid.*, 190–91; Barr, "Texas Coastal Defenses, 1861–1865," 24–27.
28. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 16, pt. I, 310–12.
29. Quoted in *ibid.*, 308.
30. Quoted in *ibid.*, 304.
31. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 16, pt. I, 312; Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy*, 190.
32. T. B. Smith, quoted in *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 15, pt. I, 78, 81.
33. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 15, pt. I, 89; Davis, *Breckinridge*, 318–25.
34. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 117; Krick, *Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain*, 248, 364.
35. *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. I, 405–7, pt. II, 205–6.
36. Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 668, 907; O'Grady, *Clear the Confederate Way*, 82–83.
37. Linderman, *Embattled Courage*, 7–16, 156–68.
38. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 66; Gleeson, *Rebel Sons of Erin*, 25–30, 152–53.
39. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 40–42; *The Life of Billy Yank*, 252–54; Robertson, *Soldiers in Blue and Gray*, 96–101.
40. Jones, ed., *The Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour*, 65–66.
41. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 38.
42. Durkin, ed., *Confederate Chaplain*, 39.
43. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 180; Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 6–7; Faust, "Christian Soldiers."
44. J. B. Wilson to Alexander Wilson, 13 Apr. 1864, Heartt-Wilson Papers, SHC.
45. Durkin, ed., *Confederate Chaplain*, 34–35.
46. Gleeson, *Rebel Sons of Erin*, 40.
47. Thomas Key, quoted in Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*, 122.
48. Jones, *Lee's Tigers*, 233–54; Confederate Muster Rolls Collection, Eighth Alabama Infantry, Company I, ADAH.

49. Jefferson Davis, quoted in Current, *Lincoln's Loyalists*, 157; Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 171.
50. McPherson, *What They Fought For*, 142–43; Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle*, 88–89.
51. Camille Armand Jules Polignac, quoted in Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*, 128.
52. Jones, *Lee's Tigers*, 233–54; Muster Rolls, Jasper Greens, First Georgia Volunteers, Company A, Confederate Army Papers, GHS; Company Rolls, First South Carolina Volunteers, Company A, SCHS.
53. Jones, ed., *The Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour*, 100–101.
54. Jones, *Lee's Tigers*, 233–54.
55. Blair Hoge to Dabney Maury, 10 Jan. 1865, Confederate States of America Archives, War Department, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, Letters and Papers, DU.
56. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 92, 417–38; Elliot, "Union Sentiment in Texas."
57. Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 31, 273–76; Symonds, *Stonewall of the West*, 171–76; Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 370–84; Joslyn, "'An Open Stand Up Affair.'"
58. Joslyn, "Irish Beginnings"; Symonds, *Stonewall of the West*, 22–24.
59. Perdue, *Pat Cleburne*, 289; *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 52, pt. II, 586–92; Symonds, *Stonewall of the West*, 32–33, 181–95.
60. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 39–40.
61. McDonough and Connelly, *Five Tragic Hours*, 160–61.
62. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 140; *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 36, pt. III, 833, 836, 843; Trudeau, *Bloody Roads South*, 264–99.
63. Quoted in *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 36, pt. I, 1032.
64. Jones, ed., *Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour*, 133. For a good review of Finegan's often-patchy career see Gleeson, *Erin Go Gray!*, 3–50.
65. Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 420, 535–36, 546–47, 569.
66. John Logan Power, "Diary of the Siege of Vicksburg," [micro.], J. L. Power Collection, MDAH.
67. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 494–95.
68. *Ibid.*, 218; Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxix. The number 20,000 is justifiable when one considers the plethora of Irish units as well as the Irish men appearing on such a variety of rosters as the New Orleans's Polish Brigade and the Jasper Grays from rural Mississippi, and the numerous others who joined state militias. Normally, one would expect about 25 percent of any population to be male and of fighting age (15–45 years old), although those very young and very old were more likely to serve in militia units. That proportion would make about 21,000 Irish men potential recruits. With the Irish, however, that percentage may have been higher, since there were more male than female Irish migrants. For example, closer to 40 percent of Savannah's Irish population was male and aged 15 to 45. If the average southern Irish proportion for men of fighting age was 35 percent, then about 29,000 Irish in the South would have been eligible for service. With 20,000 serving, the Irish participation rate would have been a very high 70 percent. Considering the reality of a high overall Confederate mobilization rate, this estimate is not as shocking as it may seem at first glance.
69. Consular Certificates, Great Britain Consulate Collection, EU; Brady, "The

Irish Community in Antebellum Memphis,” 44; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 158–61.

70. Morris, *American Catholic*, 79.

71. Durkin, ed., *Confederate Chaplain*, 67.

72. John Logan Power, *Diary of the Siege of Vicksburg* [micro.], J. L. Power Collection, MDAH; John Patten to Lizzie McFarland, 10 June 1864, 19 Mar. 1865, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.

73. Quoted in Herndon, *Celts, Catholics, and Copperheads*, 93.

74. McCaffrey, *Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, 151–52; Miller, “Catholic Religion,” 273–86.

75. *Charleston (S.C.) Catholic Miscellany*, 25 May, 1 June 1861. For an example of Irish Confederate kindness at the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863, see O’Grady, *Clear the Confederate Way*, 155–56; Arthur Freemantle, quoted in O’Grady, *Clear the Confederate Way*, 59.

76. Quoted in Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 111. See also 79–161.

77. *Charleston (S.C.) Catholic Miscellany*, 16 Mar., 13 Apr., 25 May, 1 June 1861; Durkin, ed., *John Dooley, Confederate Soldier*, 148.

78. See “Erin’s Flag” and “The Sword of Robert Lee” in Weaver, ed., *Selected Poems of Father Ryan*, 5–8.

79. Quoted in Lonin, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 155.

80. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 15 Apr. 1862. I am grateful to Mr. Chuck Real for this reference.

81. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.

CHAPTER TEN

1. John McFarland to “Emma,” 9 Oct. 1860, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.

2. John McFarland to Walter Scott, 3 Feb. 1861; John McFarland to his mother, 21 Aug. 1861, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.

3. *Charleston (S.C.) Mercury*, 8 May, 23 May 1861. Irish northerners were “blind” to this “inconsistency,” because they believed that fighting for the Union would ultimately aid the cause of Irish freedom. This reason for serving in the United States Army wore thin in 1862 and 1863 as Irish casualty rates skyrocketed. Miller, “Catholic Religion,” 274–79.

4. *Recollections of a Confederate Soldier* [typescript], William Robert Greer Papers, DU.

5. *Savannah (Ga.) Daily Morning News*, 20 Mar. 1861.

6. *Ibid.*, 9 July 1861.

7. John McFarland to [Captain of the Yazoo Rifles], 22 Apr. 1861; John McFarland to Captain N. Peake, 27 Apr., 6 June 1861, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.

8. John McFarland to Messrs. Rankin and Gilmour, 28 Dec. 1860, 23 Feb. 1861, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.

9. Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy*, 240.

10. F. A. Dicks, quoted in Campbell, *Two Hundred Years of Pharmacy*, 27.

11. P. Murphy to Major S. Hart, 29 May 1864; E. B. Sweeny to P. Murphy, 14 Oct. 1864; P. Murphy to Messrs. Milno[?] and Co., 27 Apr. 1865, John Herndon James Collection, DRT.

12. Share certificates, John Knox Series, Wilson Family Papers, SCHS.
13. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy*, 122, 163–66.
14. *Ibid.*, 144–61.
15. Sharp-Herman, *Joseph E. Davis*, 120.
16. Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 82–86; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 15–21.
17. WPA, Source Material on Mississippi: Jasper County, [micro.]; Subject File – Paulding, MDAH.
18. Nolan, *St. Mary's of Natchez*, 139–41; Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 376; Muster Roll, Hospital No. 1, Confederate Army Papers, GHS; O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 268.
19. Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1200–1211.
20. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 180; Robertson, *Soldiers in Blue and Gray*, 170–89, 216–17; Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 6–7; Faust, "Christian Soldiers," 63–90.
21. Blair Hoge to Dabney Maury, 10 Jan. 1865, Confederate States of America Archives, War Department, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, Letters and Papers, DU.
22. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 96; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 158–60.
23. Daniels, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*, 121–22.
24. Gleeson, *Rebel Sons of Erin*, 276–77; Tucker, *The Confederacy's Fighting Chaplain*, 61–156; John Bannon Diary, Yates-Snowdon Collection, SCL. I am grateful to Dr. Jeremiah Hackett for the reference from Bannon's diary.
25. Archbishop Francis Patrick [Kenrick] to Archbishop [J. M.] Odin, 14 June 1863, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
26. Tucker, *The Confederacy's Fighting Chaplain*, 133, 157–58, 165, 168.
27. *Ibid.*, 170; Herndon, *Celts, Catholics, and Copperheads*, 23–25; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 359–60. About half of these wartime immigrants were male, although many, through age or infirmity, could not serve in the army. Many Irish male immigrants who were eligible to serve did actually work as laborers.
28. "Caution to Emigrants," J. P. Benjamin to Henry Holtze, 5 Sept. 1863, John Bannon to J. P. Benjamin, 22 Apr., 17 Nov. 1863, CSA Pickett Papers, micro., LC; Tucker, *The Confederacy's Fighting Chaplain*, 171–77; Herndon, *Celts, Catholics, and Copperheads*, 105.
29. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 1–50, 294–336, 467–502. See also Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*.
30. Heisser, "Bishop Lynch's Civil War Pamphlet on Slavery," 681–96; Heisser, ed., "A Few Words on the Domestic Slavery."
31. Tucker, *The Confederacy's Fighting Chaplain*, 181.
32. Beringer and others, *Why the South Lost the Civil War*, 201; Marszalek, *Sherman*, 234–36; Rhea, *The Battle of the Wilderness*, 45–47.
33. Emily Harris, quoted in Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1222.
34. Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy*, 224–29.
35. Quoted in Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 86–87.
36. Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Mississippi, micro. 269, roll 202, Twelfth Mississippi Inf., Bre-C, NARA.
37. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 343–44.
38. Kimball, "The Bread Riot in Richmond," 149–50; Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 496–97.

39. Kimball, "The Richmond Bread Riots," 152–53; Chesson, "Harlots or Heroines?"; Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 497; Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1225.
40. Vicksburg (Miss.) *American Citizen*, 30 June 1863.
41. Sharp-Herman, *Joseph E. Davis*, 136–37.
42. Gerow, ed., *Civil War Diary of Bishop William Henry Elder*, 49; DeCell and Pritchard, eds., *Yazoo: Its Legends and Legacies*, 439.
43. Thomas Fitzgerald to John Fitzgerald, 8 July 1862, in possession of Mr. Chuck Real, Omaha, Nebraska; Capers, *Biography of a River Town*, 148–49, 157–59; Marszalek, *Sherman*, 191–93.
44. Capers, *Occupied City*, 78–81.
45. *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, 8 Jan. 1861, 9 Mar., 15 Apr., 3 May 1862.
46. Hearn, *When the Devil Came Down to Dixie*; Dawson, *Army Generals and Reconstruction*, 7–8; Trefousse, *Ben Butler*, 107–34; Nash, *Stormy Petrel*, 136–77; Nolan, *Benjamin Franklin Butler*, 150–225.
47. *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, 12, 22 Sept., 2 Oct. 1862.
48. *Ibid.*, 30 Sept. 1862.
49. Capers, *Occupied City*, 177; Hugh Kennedy Leaflet, 26 June 1863, HNOG.
50. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 35–37; Harris, *With Charity for All*, 172–73; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 60–65; Donald, *Lincoln*, 485–87.
51. McCrary, *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction*, 200–211.
52. *Ibid.*, 237–70; Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 41–52; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 60–65; Capers, *Occupied City*, 227.
53. Quoted in McCrary, *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction*, 270.
54. J. T. Morrill to E. M. Stanton, 26 Feb. 1862, quoted in *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 3, 325. I am grateful to Dr. Lawrence Kohl for this reference.
55. Degler, *The Other South*, 158–87; Current, *Lincoln's Loyalists*, 3–93; Eaton, *A History of the Confederacy*, 261–63.
56. Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*, 128.
57. Abbott, *Prison Life in the South*, 89–90.
58. Seigle, "Savannah's Own," 45.
59. John Logan Power Diary [micro.], J. L. Power Collection, MDAH.
60. Robert A. Newell to Sarah Newell, 10 Mar. 1863, 27 Apr., 1 May, 19 Aug. 1864, 27 Feb., 6 Apr. 1865, Robert A. Newell Collection, LLMVC.
61. Edward Murphy to Louis Bush, 20 Apr. 1861, Murphy Family Papers, HNOG.
62. Edward Murphy to W. H. Renaud, 1 June, 16 Aug. 1861, Murphy Family Papers, HNOG.
63. "Julia" to James C. [Jimmy] Murphy, 30 Aug. 1862, Murphy Family Papers, HNOG.
64. John Logan Power Diary [micro.], J. L. Power Collection, MDAH; Rowland, *History of Hinds County*, 32–33.
65. Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*, 128.
66. Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 81–85.
67. Quoted in Thomas, *Robert E. Lee*, 367.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South*, 18–30; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 292–335; Blassingame, *Black New Orleans*, 221; Blassingame, "Before the Ghetto," 463–64; Kolchin, *First Freedom*, 3–29.

2. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxi–xxxii; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *A Compendium of the Ninth Census*, 416; Blassingame, *Black New Orleans*, 221; Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers*, 19–20.
3. Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 11–43; Wood, *Black Scare*, 103–55; Perman, *Reunion without Compromise*, 13–53.
4. Patrick, *The Reconstruction of the Nation*, 3–8.
5. Frank Potts to [his brother] [typescript], 25 Apr. 1865, Frank Potts Letter, MC.
6. P. Murphy to E. G. Woods [copy], 9 May 1865, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC; Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.
7. Hugh S. Gwynn to “Francis,” 7 Aug. 1865, Hugh S. Gwynn to a Mrs. Johnson, 7 Aug. 1865, Hugh Gwynn Letters, MC.
8. O’Brien, “Reconstruction in Richmond,” 266–71.
9. John T. Trowbridge and Sidney Andrews, quoted in McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, 156.
10. Hugh S. Gwynn to “Francis,” 7 Aug. 1865, Hugh Gwynn Letters, MC.
11. Howell Cobb, quoted in Roark, *Masters without Slaves*, 154.
12. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, 158–60.
13. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 176–83; Patrick, *The Reconstruction of the Nation*, 29–30; McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, 134–74; Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson*, 234–35.
14. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson*, 214–22; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 199–201; Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi*, 140–50; Simkins and Woody, *South Carolina during Reconstruction*, 48–50; Williamson, *After Slavery*, 72–79.
15. Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, 4, 15, 23 Sept. 1865, in Graf, ed., *Advice after Appomattox*, 129, 131, 137, 141, 145; Hugh Kennedy to Andrew Johnson, 21 July 1865, in Graf, ed., *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, 445–46.
16. Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 96; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 13 Dec. 1864. There may have been Irish men on the jury, but it is unlikely that every member was Irish.
17. Patrick Condon to P. J. Downing, 25 Feb., 31 Mar. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA.
18. Mitchel was in jail with Jefferson Davis. Davis’s attorney was Irish-born New York City lawyer Charles O’Connor, who shared Davis’s secessionist beliefs. Patrick Condon to P. J. Downing, 31 Mar. 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Records, ACUA; Gambill, *Conservative Ordeal*, 29; *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 8, 641. President Johnson released Mitchel on condition that he leave the United States. Mitchel left for France and eventually returned to Ireland, where he delved once again into radical nationalist politics. He died in 1875 as a Member of Parliament for County Tipperary. Parliament had officially refused to seat him because he was a convicted felon, but it probably banned him because of his still-vigorous “rebel” rhetoric. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 314; Cooper, *Jefferson Davis, American*, 539.
19. Parks, “Memphis under Military Rule,” 50–58; Waller, “Community, Class and Race in the Memphis Riot of 1866,” 240.
20. Perman, *Reunion without Compromise*, 185–95; Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi*, 228–30.
21. Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 33–37; Holmes, “The Underlying Causes of the Memphis Race Riot of 1866,” 199; Lovett, “Memphis Riots,” 9–20.

22. Lovett, "Memphis Riots," 20–22; Ryan, "The Memphis Race Riots of 1866," 243; Holmes, "The Underlying Causes of the Memphis Race Riot of 1866," 195. Holmes believes that a fight between a black and a white drayman sparked the riot.

23. Unknown Irish policeman, quoted in 39th Cong., 1st sess., *House Reports*, No. 101, 9–10.

24. *Ibid.*, 10–19.

25. *Ibid.*, 16.

26. Ryan, "The Memphis Riots of 1866," 243.

27. 39th Cong., 1st sess., *House Reports*, No. 101, 5–6, 22–25.

28. Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 41–42; Waller, "Community, Class and Race in the Memphis Race Riot," 242–43; Holmes, "The Underlying Causes of the Memphis Race Riot of 1866," 221; Lovett, "Memphis Riots," 32–33. Barrington Walker uses the "whiteness" thesis (see Chapter 8) to explain the Irish actions in the riot. He believes that the Irish feared that their status as white men was in question. They were "one of Memphis' poorest and most despised groups" who "in effect 'hijack' [ed] the city for a brief moment in time." On the contrary, it was the Irish confidence in their own position in white society that instilled their hatred of black rivals. They already ran the city and did not have to hijack it by attacking blacks and Republicans. Walker, "'This Is the White Man's Day,'" 38.

29. Holmes, "The Effects of the Memphis Race Riot of 1866," 58–79; Patrick, *The Reconstruction of the Nation*, 82–83; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 261–62.

30. Quoted in Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 100–104.

31. Reynolds, "The New Orleans Riot of 1866, Reconsidered," 5–27; Vandal, "The Origins of the New Orleans Riot of 1866, Revisited," 135–65; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 104–6.

32. Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 55–58; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 106–7; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 31 July 1866; Houzeau, *My Passage at the New Orleans Tribune*, 156.

33. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, 421–47; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 261–71. The eleventh state, Tennessee, escaped Military Reconstruction because it ratified the Fourteenth Amendment in 1866.

34. Patrick, *The Reconstruction of the Nation*, 132–39; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 281–343; Williamson, *After Slavery*, 326–417; Kolchin, *First Freedom*, 151–83; Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbagger*; Nathans, *Losing the Peace*; Lowe, *Republicans and Reconstruction in Virginia*.

35. Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 11–72, *Reconstruction*, 525.

36. Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 162; McFeely, *Grant*, 364–74.

37. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 8–21; Trelease, *White Terror*.

38. "K. K. K." to E. Dowling, 27 June 1870, Gosman Family Papers, NYHS.

39. WPA, "Interesting Transcriptions and Cataloging Notes from the Nationalist of 1868–1869" [typescript], MPL.

40. *Augusta (Ga.) Banner of the South*, 27 Mar. 1869.

41. *Ibid.*, 3 July 1869.

42. Gordon, *The Orange Riots*, esp. 188–220; Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart," 664–65; [Father] P. McNamara to [Father] Fortune, 17 July 1876, Diocese of Nashville Correspondence, AAHC.

43. Quoted in Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 163.

44. *New Orleans Tribune*, quoted in Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers*, 24.
45. Abbott, *The Republican Party and the South*, 110–49, 233–44; Benedict, “The Politics of Reconstruction.”
46. WPA, “Interesting Transcriptions,” MPL.
47. Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 62, 142; *Atlanta Daily Constitution*, 28 July 1868.
48. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 58–59; Hubbell, *The South in American Literature*, 477–79; Moore, “Poetry of the Late Nineteenth Century,” 189–90. For a good synopsis of Ryan’s career see Gleeson, *Erin Go Gray!*, 53–80.
49. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 23, 59–61, 157.
50. *Augusta (Ga.) Banner of the South*, 20 Mar., 24 Apr. 1869.
51. *Ibid.*, 3 Apr., 1, 8 May, 20 Nov. 1869, 3 Sept. 1870.
52. *Ibid.*, 3 Apr., 5 June, 21 Aug. 1869.
53. Every issue of the *Banner* had a long column devoted to messages for subscribers.
54. Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, 2–7, 65–72, 94–97; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 401–11; Roark, *Masters without Slaves*, 196–209; Williamson, *After Slavery*, 96–125.
55. S. C. Edgeworth to “Uncle” [Granduncle Michael Pakenham Edgeworth], 18 Oct. 1866, 7 Jan. 1867, in McDonald, ed., *The American Edgeworths*, 205–7, 212.
56. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 213–14; Roark, *Masters without Slaves*, 165–68; Simkins and Woody, *South Carolina during Reconstruction*, 243–47.
57. Chesson, *Richmond after the War*, 120–21; Maddox, *The Virginia Conservatives*, 88–89.
58. Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 163; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 25, 27 Oct., 1 Nov. 1872.
59. Clippings, John McLaughlin Papers, GHS.
60. Trelease, “Who Were the Scalawags?,” 459.
61. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 564–75; Perman, *The Road to Redemption*, 135–77. See also Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*.
62. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 16, 17 Mar., 10, 13 Nov. 1876.
63. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 580–83; Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 345–47; Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction*.
64. Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 480–505; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 210–18; Burns, “St. Patrick’s Hall and Its Predecessor,” 77.
65. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *A Compendium of the Ninth Census*, 396–97.
66. Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Collection, LLMVC.
67. Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, xi; Fite, *Cotton Fields No More*, 1–29; Wright, *Old South, New South*, 10–14.
68. Williamson, *The Crucible of Race*, 79–108, 180–223; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 211–21, 321–49; Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 132–59; Fischer, *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana*, 133–57.

CONCLUSION

1. Peter Reynolds to William Reynolds, 12 Mar. 1854, Peter Reynolds Letter, NLI.
2. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 311.

3. Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, xiv–xv.
4. P. Kennedy to Vere Foster, 19 Mar. 1855, Foster of Glyde Papers, D3618/D/8/9, PRONI.
5. Morris, *American Catholics*, 10–11; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 495–96; Burchell, *The San Francisco Irish*, 1–13.
6. Jackson, *New Orleans Politics in the Gilded Age*; Haas, *Political Leadership in a Southern City*.
7. Potter, *To the Golden Door*, 623.
8. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, 143–44; Morris, *American Catholics*, 79; Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, 37; Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*.
9. Davis, “Models of Migration,” 348.
10. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, 48–54, 243–45; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 51–54.
11. For the importance of race as a factor in native acceptance, see Phillips, “The Central Theme of Southern History,” 31; Overdyke, *The Know-Nothings in the South*, 29; Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 417–39; Korn, “Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South”; Arsenault, “Charles Jacobson of Arkansas.”
12. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, xviii; Tyrrell, “Drink and Temperance in the Antebellum South,” 486.
13. F. L. Olmsted, quoted in Bernstein, *New York City Draft Riots*, 153.
14. Bernstein, *New York City Draft Riots*, 125–61.
15. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 279, 368–69; Herring, “Saloons and Drinking in Mississippi,” 1; Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 3–5, 30–31; James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 262.
16. John McFarland to Walter Scott, 3 Feb. 1861, Blakemore (Lizzie McFarland) Collection, MDAH.
17. Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*, 34–48; Pyron, *Southern Daughter*, 9–27.
18. Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South*, vii; Evans, *The Lonely Days Were Sundays*, xxii. Evans observes that although Jews are an integral part of southern society, he is “not certain what it means to be both a Jew and a Southerner.”

APPENDIX

1. The definitions of status used here comply closely with those used by Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians*, 290–92. There are a few differences of opinion on classification. For example, Thernstrom lists gardeners as unskilled, but they are listed here as semiskilled. He also distinguishes business proprietors as a high-white-collar group if they were listed as owning \$1,000 in real estate or \$5,000 in personal estate by the census taker. In this study, however, the required property figures are just \$1,000 real or personal estate; this classification takes into account the census takers’ vast underestimation of property values that I discovered in researching this work.
2. The 1850 census recorded only real estate, but the 1860 census recorded both real and personal property.

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 - Charles Tiernan Letter

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 - James Black Collection
 - Campbell Family Collection
 - Doak Family Papers
 - Foster of Glyde Papers
 - Givin Collection
 - William Hill Collection
 - Houston Collection

- Kerr-Graham Family Papers
- Robert McElderry Collection
- Moses Paul Letter
- John Phillips Letter
- Pinkerton Papers
- Wallace Family Papers
- Nancy Wightman Letter
- Chapel Hill, North Carolina
 - Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina
 - Brownrigg Family Papers
 - J. P. Cantwell Papers
 - Edward Conigland Papers
 - Heartt-Wilson Papers
 - T. D. S. McDowell Papers
 - Lewis N. Whittle Papers
- Charleston, South Carolina
 - City of Charleston Archives and Records Center
 - Alms House Death Register, November 1852–January 1865
 - Diocese of Charleston Archives
 - Baptismal Records, St. Mary's Church
 - Baptismal Records, St. Patrick's Church
 - Correspondence
 - File — List of Priests
 - South Carolina Historical Society
 - George Black Papers
 - Company Rolls, First South Carolina Volunteers
 - Minutes of the Hibernian Society of Charleston
 - Wilson Family Papers
- Charlottesville, Virginia
 - Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia
 - J. Q. A. Buford Papers
- Columbia, South Carolina
 - South Carolina Department of Archives and History
 - General Assembly Papers
 - South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina
 - File — Irish Volunteers Company
 - Andrew Robinson Govan Papers
 - McCann Family Papers
 - Moloney-Bryan-Ryan Papers
 - Yates-Snowdon Collection
- Dublin, Ireland
 - Archives of All Hallows College
 - Galveston Correspondence
 - Nashville Correspondence
 - New Orleans Correspondence
 - St. Augustine Correspondence
 - Savannah Correspondence
 - Manuscripts Department, National Library of Ireland
 - John Devoy Papers

- Kerby Miller Collection
- Peter Reynolds Letter
- Durham, North Carolina
 - Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University
 - Campbell Family Papers
 - Confederate States of America Archives
 - Richard Elward Papers
 - William Robert Greer Papers
 - William Hill Papers
 - James McGowan Collection
 - James Francis Tracy Papers
- Jackson, Mississippi
 - Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson
 - File — History S
 - Mississippi Department of Archives and History
 - Blakemore (Lizzy McFarland) Collection
 - J. L. Power Collection
 - Subject File — Jasper County — History
 - Subject File — Paulding
- Memphis, Tennessee
 - Memphis and Shelby County Library and Public Information Center
 - Annie W. Conner Collection
- Mobile, Alabama
 - Archives of the Archdiocese of Mobile
 - Burial Register for White People of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1853–82
 - St. Mary's C. F. Orphan Asylum Records
 - College Archives, Spring Hill College
 - File — Richard Dalton Williams
 - Register of Students, 1849–54
 - University of South Alabama Archives, University of South Alabama
 - Criminal Court Records, City Court of Mobile, Docket Books 1854–58
- Montgomery, Alabama
 - Alabama Department of Archives and History
 - Confederate Muster Rolls Collection
- Natchez, Mississippi
 - Historic Natchez Foundation
 - Adams County Antebellum Court Records
 - Subject File — Stanton Hall
- New Orleans, Louisiana
 - Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans
 - St. Mary's Orphan Boy's Asylum (New Orleans) Admissions and Discharges, 1846–69
 - University of Notre Dame Collection
 - Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center
 - William Devlin Papers
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INDEX

- Abernethy, Thomas P., 3
- Abolitionism/abolitionists, 108, 113, 125, 132, 151; and nativism, 111, 116, 130–31, 226 (n. 61); potential for Irish as, 124–26, 128–29, 138, 152–53; Irish criticism of, 125–26, 129–31, 133–34, 189–90. *See also* Slavery
- Act of Union (1800), 16, 18, 190
- Adams, D. W., 98
- Adams, John, 13, 15
- Adams, John Quincy, 18, 95
- Adams, Stephen, 110–11
- Agriculture: in Ireland, 17–19; and Irish in South, 23, 25, 29–32; in South, 25, 29; and Irish planters and overseers, 29–30, 42–43, 51, 63, 122–23
- Akenson, Donald, 200 (n. 23), 203 (n. 53)
- Alabama: Irish in, 13, 26–27, 32, 44, 71, 73, 155, 181. *See also* Mobile, Ala.: Irish in
- Albert (prince consort of Great Britain), 133
- Alcohol abuse, 50, 193; and Irish, 49, 50, 57, 60–61, 148–49, 178. *See also* Temperance: Irish and
- Alien and Sedition Acts (1798), 15, 101
- American Revolution, 4, 12–14
- Antrim, County (Ireland), 13, 25, 67
- Arkansas: Irish in, 26–27, 36, 63; Catholic Church in, 63, 80–81; Irish from, and Civil War, 142, 144, 163–64. *See also* Cleburne, Patrick Ronayne
- Armagh, County (Ireland), 75, 81
- Armstrong, June, 57
- Ascendancy, Irish, 11–12, 14, 16, 51
- Assimilation, 1, 3–4, 8, 200 (n. 29)
- Banks, Nathaniel, 169
- Bannon, Father John, 163–65
- Barry, Bishop John, 79–80
- Barry, William S., 111
- Baton Rouge, Battle of (1862), 147
- Beauregard, P. G. T., 175
- Belfast, Ireland, 12, 14, 25, 29
- Berlin, Ira, 5
- Berrien, John Macpherson, 112
- Black, George, 122
- Black, James, 33, 46, 60
- Black, Sarah, 46
- Blanc, Archbishop Antoine, 82, 85, 87
- Bonaparte, Napoleon, 16–17
- Boru, Brian, 14
- Boston Pilot*, 24–25, 155–56
- Brady, M., 58
- Bragg, Braxton, 152–53
- Breckinridge, John C., 138, 147
- Brehon Law, 56
- Brenan, Joseph, 70
- Brogan, James, 49
- Brown, Albert Gallatin, 104, 110
- Brown, John, 137
- Brown, J. M. T., 42
- Browne, William, 154
- Brownlow, William G. “Parson,” 110
- Bryson, H. C., 31
- Buchanan, James, 112
- Burk, Patrick, 122
- Burke, John, 31
- Burke, Thomas, 88
- Burke, Thomas (journalist), 96
- Burns, Charles, 43
- Burns, Michael, 44
- Burns, Timothy, 39
- Butler, Benjamin, 168–69
- Butler, Daniel, 32–33, 44
- Byrne, Bishop Andrew, 63, 79–81, 83, 163
- Calhoun, John C., 74–75, 97, 133
- California: Irish in, 21
- Campbell, Alexander, 123
- Campbell, John, 65
- Canada: Irish in, 26, 29

- Carey, Mathew, 98
 Carlow, County (Ireland), 31
 Carr, John, 56, 64
 Carr, Mathew, 142
 Carr, Patrick, 31, 64
 Carroll, D. M., 63
 Cartwright, Samuel, 103
 Catholic Church
 — in Ireland: 11–12, 14, 16–18, 21, 164; and devotional revolution in, 85, 217–18 (n. 51)
 — in United States: 74, 101, 107; Irish in South in, 1, 7, 20, 52, 58, 59, 149–50, 188–89, 191, 193; Irish clerics in, 1–2, 69, 76–91 *passim*, 109–22 *passim*, 163–65, 180–81; Irish nuns in, 46, 83–84, 113, 120, 162; lay trustee crisis in, 76–77
 Catholic Emancipation, 16, 18. *See also* O'Connell, Daniel
 Cedar Mountain, Battle of (1862), 147
 Celtic South thesis, 4–5
 Charleston, S.C., 26; Irish in, 16, 25, 29–31, 33–36, 50, 55, 57, 65, 75; Irish neighborhoods in, 59; Irish societies in, 60–62, 66, 159; Irish nationalism in, 68–69, 71, 131; Catholic Church in, 76–80, 87, 91, 165; Irish and politics in, 106, 109, 118–19, 138; Irish from, and Civil War, 142, 156, 158–59, 161, 165, 170. *See also* England, Bishop John; Lynch, Bishop Patrick N.
 Civil War, 8, 71, 141, 192–93. *See also* Confederate States of America
 Claiborne, F. L., 104
 Clark, Dennis, 2–3
 Clark, Dr. Josiah, 47
Clan na Gael, 72–73
 Class divisions, 8, 115–16, 192–93, 224 (n. 1); among Irish, 60–64, 91–93, 120, 188, 209 (n. 85)
 Clay, Henry, 63, 99, 104, 136
 Cleburne, Patrick Ronayne, 142, 144, 147, 151–53, 155, 176
 Clunan, John, 167
 Cochran, Dennis, 58
 Collins, Bernard, 63
 Collins, John, 105
 Condon, Patrick (Godfrey Massey), 71–73, 176
 Confederate States of America, 2–3, 141; studies of Irish in, 5; Irish soldiers in, 8, 142–51, 154–58, 170–71, 176, 179, 185, 230–31 (n. 68); Irish civilians in, 8, 158, 161–63, 165–67; sailors in, 44; and parallels with Ireland, 141–42, 152, 156–59; and criticism of Irish in North, 155–56, 159–60, 164, 231 (n. 3); Union sympathies of Irish in, 168–70; as Lost Cause, 172, 180, 182–83, 185–86, 191. *See also* Civil War; Nationalism: southern
 Conigland, Edward, 57, 72, 120
 Conley, Cullen Thomas, 31
 Connecticut: Irish in, 29
 Connelly, John, 154
 Conroy, John, 35
 Continental System, 16
 Coony, M., 73
 Corcoran, Dennis, 122, 129–30
 Corcoran, Michael, 170
 Cork, County (Ireland), 61, 66, 77, 82, 121
 Corkery, Daniel, 201 (n. 3)
 Corrigan, John, 66
 Corrigan, M., 66
 Cowardin, James A., 183
 Crampton, John, 50
 Creighton, John, 177–78
 Crime: Irish and, 20, 49, 67, 60–61, 105, 188, 193. *See also* Alcoholism; Irish and; Violence: Irish and; Women, Irish: and domestic violence
 Cromwell, Oliver, 182
 Culhane, Catherine, 166
 Culhane, Cornelius, 166
 Culhane, John, 166
 Culhane, Martin, 166
 Cullen, Archbishop Paul, 85, 164
 Cumming, George B., 68
 Cunningham, John, 109
 Curran, James, 88
 Curry, Leonard, 24

- Davis, Jefferson, 41, 145–46, 150, 153, 166–67; and defense of Irish, 102, 106
- Davis, Joseph, 162
- De Bow, James D. B., 24, 140
- Delaware Canal, 19
- Democratic Party, 7, 107, 114, 137–38, 193, 220 (n. 24); and immigration policies, 95, 102, 183; and nativism, 109–12; Irish and, 94–102, 106, 117–20, 136–38, 180–86, 189, 191. *See also* Politics (American)
- Derbigny, Charles, 115
- Derry, Ireland, 12, 50, 59, 65, 67
- Devine, Pat, 57
- Devlin, William, 67
- Devoy, John, 73
- Diaspora: Irish and, 6–7, 21, 56
- Dillon, Michael, 64, 68, 122–23
- Disease: Irish in South and, 28, 46–48
- Dobbs, Arthur, 13
- Dohan, Daniel, 88
- Dolan, Timothy, 50
- Donegal, County (Ireland), 67
- Donelson, Andrew Jackson, 112
- Donigan, Kitty, 124
- Donovan, Denis, 122
- Donovan, Mike, 167
- Dooley, Captain John, 156
- Dooley, John, 40, 71
- Douglas, Stephen, 137–38
- Douglass, Frederick, 121–22
- Dowling, E., 180
- Dowling, Richard “Dick,” 145–47
- Down, County (Ireland), 13, 15, 75
- Dublin, Ireland, 11, 14, 59, 128, 130
- Dunne, Thomas, 45
- Dwyer, Edward, 57
- Economy: Irish, 12, 171–18, 19; American, 18, 20; southern, 24, 25, 29, 34, 44–45, 53–54, 193. *See also* Work: Irish and
- Education, 14, 58, 89, 92, 149, 180–81
- Elder, Bishop William Henry, 86–88
- Elder, James, 42
- Ellis, Powhatan, 96
- Elward, Richard, 96–97, 136
- Emigration: by Irish to America, 2–4; colonial, 11, 13; prefamine, 18–19, 33; famine, 19–20, 81; postfamine, 20; to South, 22, 28–29, 33
- Emmet, Robert, 60, 143
- England, Bishop John, 60, 77–79, 81–82, 91, 118; and compatibility of Catholicism and republicanism, 77–78; and Irish nationalism, 78; and slavery, 78, 128–31; and diocesan constitution, 87–88
- England, 11, 13, 15–18, 110, 111; and emigration from Liverpool, 63, 81, 204 (n. 13); and Civil War, 155–56, 160, 164
- “Era of Good Feelings,” 18
- Erie Canal, 19
- Falkner, William C., 42
- Family life: Irish, 4, 55, 56, 58; of Irish in South, 56–58, 65–67, 188
- Federalist Party, 15, 95, 100–101
- Fenian Brotherhood, 71–73, 214 (nn. 98, 103); in South, 71–73, 155, 176, 181–82. *See also* Nationalism: Irish
- Fifteenth Amendment, 179, 181
- Fillmore, Millard, 112
- Finegan, Joseph, 153–54
- Finney, Charles G., 101, 107
- Fitzgerald, Thomas, 167
- Fitzhugh, George, 24
- Flagg, Edmund, 97
- Fleming, Rebecca, 65
- Florida: Irish in, 26–27, 36, 73, 86–87; Irish from, and Civil War, 153–54
- Flournoy, Thomas, 111
- Fort Sumter Crisis (1861), 142
- Foster, Roy, 200 (n. 26)
- Foster, Vere, 28, 62
- Fourteenth Amendment, 179
- Franklin, Benjamin, 13
- Franklin, Battle of (1864), 153
- Free Blacks, 3, 124–25; Irish and, 127–29, 133, 139, 187, 190. *See also* Race; Slavery; Whiteness debate
- Frémont, John C., 112

French Revolution, 14, 76–77
Fugitive Slave Law (1850), 110

Gallagher, Mary, 43
Garnett, T. S., 147
Garland, Bishop Francis X., 80, 85,
139
Genovese, Eugene, 224–25 (n. 20)
George III (king of Great Britain), 16
Georgia: Irish in, 25–27, 30–36, 41,
53, 57, 59, 73, 79–80, 122–24, 143,
182–83, 194. *See also* Savannah, Ga.:
Irish in
Germans, 63, 99–101, 110, 114, 127,
150–51, 177, 180
Gettysburg, Battle of (1863), 146,
156, 165–66
Givin, Robert, 32
Gleason, Denis, 57
Gleeson, Michael (Charleston), 50,
55, 100
Gleeson, Michael (New Orleans),
175–76
Glorious Revolution, 10
Gone with the Wind, 42, 194
Goodell, Jackson, 177
Goodman, Walter, 42
Grant, Ulysses S., 154, 172, 180
Great Awakening, 75
Great Britain. *See* England
Great Famine (1845–52), 18, 25, 27;
and impact on Irish in South, 6, 20,
22, 59, 62–66, 152; in Ireland, 19,
56, 202–3 (n. 40); and South, 62–
63, 66, 103–5
Gregory (Quarter Acre) Clause, 19,
56
Griffin, Daniel, 57–58
Griffin, George, 57–58
Griffin, Mortimer “Murtha,” 31, 122
Gutman, Herbert, 5
Gwynn, Hugh, 174

Hagan, James, 68, 97–98, 132–34,
136
Hamilton, Alexander, 15
Hardee, William J., 152
Harkins, Peter, 34
Harrington, Catherine, 124

Haughery, Margaret, 44, 88–90
Hayes, Catherine, 105
Hayes, Rutherford B., 184
Hays, Harry T., 175, 179
Henasy, P., 64
Henry, Elizabeth, 31
Henry, Robert, 31
Heweston, James, 32
Hibernian Societies, 16, 55, 61–62,
66–68, 88–89, 156, 159, 161, 188
Hickey, Walter, 97
Hill, William, 64
Hillyer, Giles, 110, 112
Hood, John Bell, 153
Hore, Father Thomas, 81
Horsman, Ronald, 227 (n. 75)
Houston, Sam, 112
Howard Association, 47. *See also*
Disease
Hudson Canal, 19
Hughes, Archbishop John, 107, 192
Hughes, Felix, 143, 147
Hughes, John, 44
Hunter, John, 88–89

Illinois: Irish in, 20–21
Indiana: Irish in, 20
Integration: of Irish in South, 6–7, 22,
92–93, 120, 140, 173, 185–87,
189–94, 222 (n. 75)
Iowa: Irish in, 20, 156
Irish Emigrant Society (New York),
66–67
Irish Poor Law Extension Act (1847),
19
Irish Republican Brotherhood. *See*
Fenian Brotherhood
Italians, 49

Jackson, Andrew, 1, 3–4, 18, 74, 95,
99, 102, 111–12, 117
Jackson, Thomas J. “Stonewall,” 144,
148
Jacksonian Democracy, 4, 84, 101,
106
James II (king of England), 10
Jefferson, Thomas, 9, 15, 76
Jews, 10–11, 237 (nn. 11, 18)
Johnson, Andrew, 173–76, 178

- Johnson, Prince, 128
 Johnston, Joseph, 153
- Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), 110
 Keating, James, 44
 Keiley, A. M., 183
 Kelley, John, 122
 Kellogg, William Pitt, 182
 Kelly, Michael, 49
 Kelly, Patrick, 67
 Kemble, Fanny, 124–25, 128. *See also*
 Abolitionism/abolitionists
 Kennedy, Hugh, 168–69, 171, 175,
 178
 Kennedy, P., 51, 71, 125
 Kenrick, Archbishop Francis, 164
 Kentucky: Irish in, 3
 Keon, Bridget, 48
 Kernan, James, 42
 Kerr, John, 71
 Kerry, County (Ireland), 1, 67
 Kindelhon, Father Adam, 82
 Know-Nothing Party, 7–8, 107–13,
 118–20, 137–38, 142, 144, 180,
 186, 189, 192; in New Orleans,
 113–18; charged with abolitionism,
 119–20. *See also* Nativism; Politics
 Knox, John (Charleston), 28, 75, 161
 Kohl, Lawrence, 219 (n. 8)
 Ku Klux Klan, 180
- Labor. *See* Work
 Labor activism: Irish in South, 51–54,
 125, 188
 Langfield, Robert, 42
 Larkin, Emmet, 217–18 (n. 51)
 Leary, John, 29
 Lee, James, 63
 Lee, Robert E., 154, 171–72, 182
 Lincoln, Abraham, 1, 137–39, 142,
 144–45, 169, 173, 177, 190
 Lonn, Ella, 5
 Louisiana: Irish in, 24, 26–27, 33, 43,
 53–67 *passim*, 85, 87, 96, 128, 138;
 Irish from, and Civil War, 143, 150–
 51, 170–71. *See also* New Orleans,
 La.: Irish in
 Loughrey, Enias, 67
 Lockett, Sylvester, 31
 Lockett, Thomas H., 30
 Lyle, Hugh, 42
 Lynch, Bartholomew, 176
 Lynch, Bishop Patrick N., 79–80, 82,
 118–19; and Confederate States of
 America, 142, 156, 165, 170
 Lynch, Catherine, 128
 Lynch, John Roy, 128
 Lynch, Patrick, 128
 Lyons, Patrick, 66
- McBride, James, 49
 McCaffrey, Lawrence, 203 (n. 53)
 McCann, James, 30
 McCarthy, Harry, 141
 McCormack, Rose, 28
 McCutcheon, Robert, 62
 McDonald, Forrest, 4–5
 McDowell, John, 51
 McDowell, Thomas, 63–64
 McElderry, Robert, 13, 50, 71, 75,
 125–26
 McElderry, William, 55, 126
 McElhany, Mary, 49
 McFarland, John, 32, 123, 158–60
 McGarahan, Father James, 69, 130
 McGloin, James, 32
 McGonagle, John, 39
 McGraw, P. H., 85–86, 88, 122, 160–
 61
 McGuiggan, John “Red Jack,” 124
 McKowen, John, 64–66
 McLaughlin, Father Peter, 81, 87
 McLaughlin, John, 3–33, 64, 90, 129,
 184
 McLaughlin, Maria, 129
 McMahon, Father George, 81, 84
 McMullen, John, 32
 McNeilly, Father James, 163
 McNutt, Alexander, 97
 McRae, John J., 111
 McWhiney, Grady, 4–5
 Madison, James, 15
 Magevney, Eugene, 26, 70
 Maginnis, John, 91, 116–18, 139,
 168–69, 171
 Magruder, John Bankhead, 146
 Maguire, John Francis, 23
 Mahony, David, 115

- Malone, Patrick, 31
- Manassas, First Battle of (1861), 148, 159–60
- Manassas, Second Battle of (1862), 166
- Maréchal, Archbishop Ambrose, 76–77
- Maryland: Irish in, 3, 20, 23, 52
- Massachusetts: Irish in, 20–21, 23, 29, 101
- Mathew, Father Theobald, 61–62, 85, 132. *See also* Temperance: Irish and
- Mayo, County (Ireland), 160
- Meagher, Mary, 43
- Meagher, Thomas Francis, 76, 155, 159
- Meighan, John, 116
- Memminger, Christopher, 124–25, 140, 160
- Memphis, Tenn.: Irish in, 26, 35–36, 51–52, 105; Irish neighborhoods in, 58; Catholic Church in, 62; Irish nationalism in, 69–71; Irish politics in, 138, 167–68; Irish from, and Civil War, 143–44; Irish from, in 1866 race riot, 176–78
- Mexican War, 134; Irish in, 134–35
- Miles, William Porcher, 118–19
- Militias: Irish, 61–62, 73, 135, 142–44
- Miller Kerby, 6, 11, 21, 198 (n. 7), 203 (n. 53), 213 (n. 72)
- Miller, Randall, 200 (n. 28)
- Missionary Ridge, Battle of (1863), 152
- Mississippi: Irish in, 26–27, 30–68 *passim*, 86–87, 96, 122, 124, 128, 174, 185–86; Irish from, and Civil War, 142–43, 154, 156–59, 161–62, 167. *See also* Natchez, Miss.: Irish in
- Missouri: Irish in, 3, 20, 163–64
- Mitchel, John, 160, 176, 230 (n. 68); in Ireland, 19, 69, 234 (n. 18); in South, 70, 226 (n. 64); and Fenians, 72; and defense of slavery, 132; and defense of South, 137, 140; and Confederate States of America, 154–56. *See also* Young Ireland
- Mitchel, John, Jr., 156
- Mitchell, Margaret, 42, 194
- Mobile, Ala.: Irish in, 24, 26–28, 32, 35–36, 39, 42–57 *passim*, 63, 67, 124; Irish neighborhoods in, 59; Irish societies in, 62; Irish nationalism in, 69, 71, 130; Catholic Church in, 69, 82, 87, 113–14, 120, 130, 143, 163; Irish and politics in, 113–14, 138; Irish from, and Civil War, 143, 150, 163, 166
- Monroe, Alfred, 136
- Monroe, John T., 116, 178
- Moore, John, 41
- Moore, John J., 40
- Moore, Patrick F., 154
- Mortality: of Irish, 20, 28, 46–48, 57. *See also* Disease; Violence: Irish and
- Mulcahy, Thady, 50
- Mulledy, Thomas, 31
- Mullon, Father Ignatius J., 62, 82–84, 88, 91, 117, 122
- Murphy, Edward, 57, 171
- Murphy, James, 49
- Murphy, Mary, 43
- Murphy, P., 161
- Murphy, Patrick, 44, 58, 64–65, 91, 123, 126, 157, 174, 185
- Natchez, Miss.: Irish in, 29–30, 36, 38–50 *passim*, 67, 75; Irish societies in, 60–61; Catholic Church in, 62, 75–76, 85–88; Irish and politics in, 99, 112, 119; Irish from, and Civil War, 142–43, 160
- Nationalism
- Irish: in South, 60, 67–73, 94, 116, 180–82; southerners and, 102–3, 180–82, 188
- southern, 3, 111, 132–33; Irish and, 136–37, 138–40. *See also* Confederate States of America; Secession; Slavery
- Nativism, 7, 20, 47, 99, 109, 159; and politics, 94–95, 101–2, 117; and religion, 99–101, 107, 113, 119; and “Paddy” image, 105–6, 110, 221 (n. 69); and abolition, 111, 116, 130–31, 226 (n. 61); and slavery, 133. *See also* Abolitionism/abo-

- litionists: Irish criticism of; Know-Nothing Party; Slavery: Irish and
 Neighborhoods (Irish): 20; in South, 37, 47, 58–59, 82, 185, 188, 191
 Nevitt, John B., 103
 Newell, Robert, 170–71
 New Jersey: Irish in, 26
 New Orleans, La., 3–4, 47, 63, 82, 211 (n. 22); Irish in, 5, 34–67 passim, 105, 123; Irish neighborhoods in, 58–59, 62, 82, 87, 114–15, 117; Catholic Church in, 59, 62, 65, 76, 87, 91, 117, 122; Irish societies in, 60, 62–63, 176; Irish nationalism in, 68–72; Irish and politics in, 95, 99–102, 108, 191–92; Know-Nothings in, 108, 113–18; Irish from, and Civil War, 143–51 passim, 158–59, 166; Irish and Reconstruction in, 167–69, 178–79, 181, 184–84
 New Orleans, Battle of (1815), 3–4, 18
New Orleans Daily True Delta, 91, 96, 116, 168–69, 171, 175
 New South, 4, 186, 191–92
 New York: Irish in, 12–30 passim, 50, 107, 180, 182, 191–93
New York Irish American, 24
 Nicholls, Francis T., 184
 Niehaus, Earl F., 5
 Noonan, P. J., 122
 North Carolina: Irish in, 13, 25, 26–27, 36, 52–64 passim, 72–80 passim, 90–91, 138; Irish from, and Civil War, 143, 149, 156
 Nullification, 133; Irish and, 136

 Oakes, James, 224–25 (n. 20)
 O'Brien, John, 44
 O'Brien, Michael, 49
 O'Brien, William Smith, 69–70
 O'Byrne, D. A., 160
 O'Callaghan, Samuel, 42
 O'Connell, Daniel, 102; and Catholic Emancipation, 18, 67, 78, 85; and Repeal of Union, 18, 68–69; and slavery, 68, 73, 112, 122; Irish southerners rejection of, 129–31, 139
 O'Connor, Michael, 86
 O'Connor, Peter J., 48
 Odin, Archbishop Jean-Marie, 83
 O'Doherty, Redmond, 67
 O'Donnell, James, 49
 O'Flinn, Cornelius, 31
 O'Gorman, Richard, 182
 Ohio: Irish in, 20, 29, 128
 O'Hara, Gerald (fictional), 192
 O'Hara, Scarlett (fictional), 194
 O'Hea, Thomas, 142
 O'Leary, Stephen, 44, 114
 Olmsted, Frederick Law, 36–37, 54
 O'Mahony, John, 73
 O'Malley, Ellen, 56
 O'Neill, Father Jeremiah, Sr., 1–2, 53, 83, 118, 130, 136–38, 160, 198 (n. 2)
 O'Reilly, Father Bernard, 81, 82
 O'Reilly, Michael, 42
 O'Reily, Father M. D., 81, 84
 Owsley, Frank, 1

 Panic of 1837, 18
 Park, John, 167, 176–78
 Patton, John, 155
 Paul, Moses, 65, 68, 126–27
 "Penal laws," 11
 Pennsylvania: Irish in, 2, 12–13, 23, 26, 29, 101
 Peters, John, 65
 Phelan, John, 26
 Phillips, Abby, 43
 Phillips, John, 25
 Pidgeon, Hugh, 55–56
 Pierce, Franklin, 112
 Pitt, William, 16
 Pius VII (pope), 76
 Pius IX (pope), 165
 "Plain folk," 1–2
 Politics (American): and Irish in South, 1, 7, 94–102, 106; Irish and, 16; and Irish votes in South, 95–101 passim, 106, 110, 113–18, 136–37; and public jobs for Irish, 99–100, 106. *See also* Democratic Party; Know-Nothing Party; Republican Party; GOP; Whig Party
 Polk, James K., 99, 134

- Porter, Alexander, 43, 96, 101–2
 Porterfield, William, 41, 102, 161–62, 167
 Portier, Bishop Michael, 87
 Potts, Frank, 174
 Poverty: of Irish in America, 20; of Irish in South, 28, 38, 48, 56–57, 62
 Power, James, 32, 134
 Power, John Logan, 97, 141, 154–55, 170
 Prendergast, J. C., 62–63, 91, 98–99, 100, 116–17
 Prentiss, Sergeant S., 97, 104
 Protestants: in Ireland, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 51, 107; in America, 22, 89–93, 104, 108, 183, 186, 193; Irish, in South, 31–32, 71, 74–75, 88–89, 93, 149. *See also* Celtic South thesis; Scots Irish
 Punch, Philip J., 97
 Putnam, Seville, 144
- Quinlan, Bishop John, 82, 143, 163
 Quinlan, John, 131
 Quinn, Matthew, 63
 Quitman, John A., 29, 96, 98, 110, 132
- Race, 8–9; and Irish in South, 139–40, 173, 183–86, 190–91, 193, 227 (n. 750). *See also* Free Blacks; Slavery; Whiteness debate
 Real, James, 156
 Reconstruction, 4, 8; Irish and Presidential, 169, 174, 176–79, 185; Irish and Radical, 173, 179–86. *See also* Democratic Party; Republican Party; GOP
 Reddy, Thomas, 39
 Republican Party: Jeffersonian, 16—GOP: 1, 4, 12, 119–20, 137–39, 169, 173, 190, 192, 193; and Radicals, 173–74, 176, 179–82; and Irish, 164, 175–76, 180–86. *See also* Reconstruction
 Reynolds, John, 43
 Reynolds, Peter, 51
 Richmond, Va.: Irish in, 26–44 *passim*, 53; Irish and politics in, 113, 180; Irish from, and Civil War, 143–44, 156, 166–67, 183
 Riley, Pat, 30
 Roach, James, 41
 Rogers, Margaret, 57
 Rogers, Michael, 65
 Ryan, Father Abram, 156, 163, 182–83
 Ryan, James, 97
 Ryan, Michael, 31
 Ryan, Tom, 35
- Sabine Pass, Battle of (1863), 145–46
 St. Patrick's Day: in South, 60–61, 73, 88, 136, 141, 160, 212 (n. 33)
 Sarsfield, Patrick, 14, 143
 Savannah, Ga., 1, 47; Irish and politics in, 1, 118, 135–36, 184; Irish in, 1–2, 5, 25–36 *passim*, 53–56; Catholic Church in, 1–2, 53, 80, 85, 130, 136–39; Irish neighborhoods in, 58–59; and “Savannah Plan,” 89; Irish societies in, 60–61, 67–68, 88–89, 160; Irish nationalism in, 67–69, 131; Irish from, and Civil War, 143, 160, 170
 Scots Irish, 4, 12–14, 25, 119, 198 (n. 7)
 Scott, Winfield, 99
 Scully, William, 48
 Secession, 1; Irish and, 1, 136–40, 141–42. *See also* Nationalism: southern
 Seward, William Henry, 99
 Seymour, William J., 145, 149, 154
 Shally, John, 48
 Shanahan, Francis, 88
 Sharkey, Alice, 33, 55
 Sheen, Tim, 36
 Sheeran, Father James, 149, 155
 Shelly, John, 48
 Shenandoah Valley Campaign (1862), 144–45
 Sheridan, Phil, 72
 Sherman, William T., 150, 167–68, 170
 Shoemaker, Edward M., 5
 Slavery, 37, 107, 120, 132–36, 220 (nn. 5, 20); Irish and, 6, 8, 11, 53–

- 54, 121, 127, 139–40, 210 (n. 81); and Irish compared to slaves, 105, 123–24, 130; and slaveholders compared with Anglo-Irish landlords, 121, 127, 132, 189; and Irish ownership of slaves, 122–23; and Irish relationships with slaves, 123–25, 129; Irish defense of, 125–27, 130–31, 165. *See also* Free Blacks; Race; Whiteness debate; Work
- Slidell, John, 99, 138
- Smith, Adam, 174
- Smith, Leon, 146
- Smyth, Rev. Thomas, 75
- Society of Friends (Dublin), 66
- Society of United Irishmen. *See* United Irishmen, Society of
- South Carolina: Irish in, 13, 25–37 passim, 64, 73, 86, 109–10; Irish from, and Civil War, 162. *See also* Charleston, S.C.: Irish in
- Spring Hill College (Mobile, Ala.), 92, 113
- Stanton, Frederick, 29–30, 122
- Stephens, Alexander H., 111, 138
- Stith, Gerard, 115–16
- Stokes, Father Joseph, 86
- Stower, Mary, 43
- Sullivan, Dennis, 49
- Sullivan, Robert, 63
- Sydnor, Charles S., 3
- Taylor, Richard, 144–45, 148, 150
- Taylor, Zachary, 135
- Temperance: Irish and, 61–62
- Tennessee: Irish in, 21–36 passim, 51–52, 70–71, 96, 9, 174, 181; Irish from, and Civil War, 143–44, 148–49, 163. *See also* Memphis, Tenn.: Irish in
- Test Act (1704), 12
- Texas: Irish in, 26–36 passim, 66, 71–73, 75, 91, 134, 138, 192; Irish from, and Civil War, 143, 145–46, 161, 171
- Thigpen, Paul, 5
- Thirteenth Amendment, 175
- Thomas Aquinas, Saint, 92
- Thomson, David, 65
- Tiernan, Charles, 64
- Tocqueville, Alexis de, 92–93, 189
- Toleration Act (1719), 12
- Toombs, Robert, 111
- Tracy, James Francis, 56, 123
- Trammin, Arthur, 65
- Treaty of Ghent (1814), 18
- Tucker, Nathaniel Beverly, 133
- Tucker, Tilghman, 97–98
- Tyler, John, 102, 131
- Tyler, Robert, 102, 131
- Tyrone, County (Ireland), 65
- United Irishmen, Society of, 14–16; in United States, 15–16, 22, 63, 96, 101–2, 122–23, 201–2 (n. 21)
- United States Catholic Miscellany*, 77, 80, 119, 142
- Van Buren, Martin, 96
- Vessey, Denmark, 124
- Vicksburg, Siege of (1863), 146, 165, 167
- Victoria (queen of Great Britain), 133
- Violence: Irish and, 20, 49, 50, 51, 60–61, 188; Irish and political, 114–18, 176–79, 193. *See also* Alcoholism: Irish and; Crime: Irish and; Women: and domestic violence
- Virginia: Irish in, 13, 26–27, 36, 48–76 passim, 174; Irish from, in Civil War, 143, 145–48. *See also* Richmond, Va.: Irish in
- Wallace, Patrick, 29
- Ward, John, 122
- Washington, George, 12, 28, 68, 130
- Washington, D.C., 63, 144
- Waterloo, Battle of (1815), 17
- Waterman, Charles, 115
- Way, Peter, 209 (n. 85)
- Weaver, Herbert, 5
- Weir, Rev. William, 75
- Wells, James Madison, 175, 178
- Wexford, County (Ireland), 15, 25, 79, 81
- Whalen, John, 49
- Wharton, Thomas, 52

- Whig Party, 97, 99, 114, 138, 219
 (n. 8); Irish and, 7, 84–96, 98–99,
 100, 102–3, 116–17, 189; and
 nativism, 101–2, 108–9, 111. *See*
also Know-Nothing Party
- White, E. D., 96
- White, Maunsel, 63, 70, 122
- Whiteness debate, 121, 224 (n. 2),
 235 (n. 28)
- Wiatt, Mary, 57
- Wicklow, County (Ireland), 81
- Wightman, Nancy, 42, 46–47, 127–
 28
- “Wild Geese,” 10
- William of Orange (king of England),
 10, 12, 14, 143
- Williams, Barney, 105
- Williams, Richard D’Alton, 46, 70
- Wilmot, David, 135
- Wilson, Alexander, 75
- Wilson, Rev. Benjamin, 13
- Wise, Henry A., 111
- Women, Irish, 56, 88–90; and work,
 42–44, 46, 51–52, 63, 105, 210
 (n. 88); and domestic violence, 57;
 and blacks, 124, 127–28; and Civil
 War, 162–63, 165–67
- Woodley, Father Robert, 48
- Work: Irish and, 19, 187–88, 193, 206
 (nn. 2–5), 237 (n. 1); on public
 works, 23, 33–35; on railroads, 33–
 35, 51–52, 66–67, 86–87, 102, 125;
 on docks, 33–34, 39, 44–45, 52, 54;
 in service industries, 45–46, 51–52;
 as laborers, 25, 33–54 *passim*, 63,
 103, 123, 143, 183, 188; as police,
 44, 100, 112, 114–15, 119, 167,
 175–80, 188; as artisans, 23, 38–41,
 44–45, 48, 53, 125, 127; as mer-
 chants, 39–44, 63, 124, 188; as pro-
 fessionals, 39–42; as entertainers,
 105–6. *See also* Labor activism;
- Women, Irish: and work
- Worrell, Alex, 42
- Wright, Gavin, 210 (n. 81), 227–28
 (n. 100)
- Yellow Fever. *See* Disease
- Young Ireland, 69, 73, 102, 131, 182.
See also, Mitchel, John